A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MILTON AND TULASI DAS WITH REFERENCE TO PARADISE LOST AND RAMCARITMANAS

Abstract

By

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Thesis Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to

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ABSTRACT

While putting all that is contained in my dissertation in the form of an Abstract I would like to say first that my work, because of its nature, is not and can not be exhaustive. John Milton and Tulasi Das, growing old and fresh enigmatically, have both become, through ages, complex personalities. Everytime one re-reads them one finds some fresh aspects to examine. Both the poets are elusive, subtle, liberal and orthodox at the same time. They are puritan, humanist and radical also. My purpose is to investigate and outline the resemblances and differences in the following spheres of the works of John Milton and Tulasi Das:

1. Holy sources and handling of those sources.
2. Transformation of ancient and contemporary classics and the indebtedness of these two poets to them.
3. The poet's attitude to women.
4. The treatment of two mighty antagonists, one each from Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas.

My efforts have largely remained confined to the methods of approach of the poets to the materials at hand,

or acquired through study and contact. I have pointed out their additions and alterations also with a view to showing their skill in doing so. The most striking feature of their works is that Milton and Tulasi have not described the un-described but the indescribable in their epics. I have selected only a few aspects of the indescribable here and tried to examine the various issues relating to them. But my attempt has always been to show that the two poets resemble more than they differ in their attitudes and styles. Their profound concern for humanity and pervasive love for righteous conduct act as the binding factor in their works. They believe in the principles of co-existence of the holy with the human. Neither the holy can exist in disregard to the human nor the human can exist in disregard to the holy. This is a unique proposition; and the subject offers abundant scope for fresh research. In accordance with the various aspects, which I have dealt with in my work, I propose to divide this Abstract into four sections in which I may be able to describe in brief the contents of this thesis.

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Having outlined the biographical events in the first chapter, I have proceeded, in the second chapter, to exami

the comparable aspects of John Milton and Tulasi Das. I have traced out the links and the indebtedness of these poets to the holy sources which were deemed to be partly out of human interpretation. This means the Bible for Milton, and the Vedas and Puranas for Tulasi. It becomes necessary here to remove the possibility of any misconception about the treatment of this aspect. I have not made any attempt to establish any identification between Christianity and Hinduism or the Holy Bible and the Vedas for that reason. That would be a vain endeavour and perhaps irrelevant from theological point of view. My sole purpose has been the comparative study of the two poets; and I have tried in this chapter to examine how the two poets make use of their holy sources in their respective cultural backgrounds.

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The third chapter of the dissertation traces out the indebtedness of John Milton and Tulasi Das to the ancient classics. The ancient classics have been of immense value to both of them. There is no possibility of misunderstanding about the nature of the borrowings from these classics.

They are primarily literary works and are acknowledged as epics. In this connection I have taken Homer and Virgil mainly for the study of Milton, and Valmiki and Vyasa for the study of Tulasi Das. The difference between the two sides has been in relation to the borrowings, Milton having borrowed the style only, while Tulasi Das having borrowed both the ideas and the story. I have argued how John Milton and Tulasi Das have successfully screened these materials while relying on the old models; and how they have added new ideas and made alterations. It is in the process of these screenings, omissions, additions and alterations that a transformation of the ancient classics takes place in the Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas.

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Nothing in the lives of the two poets has played so important a role as woman; and I have made woman the subject-matter of my discussion in the fourth chapter of this thesis. This topic is of unique importance, particularly for the controversies that are frequently raised. Paradise Lost was planned to become a work doctrinal to a nation in the same way as Ramcaritmanas in the respective regions of the

poets. Whatever has found way in these two epics is of great significance to the humanity. The attitude of the poets towards women is, therefore, an important topic. Milton had received a great shock from a woman he loved as Tulasi Das had received. Was this factor contributory to the formation of their attitude towards women? This question has been answered well in the fourth chapter. I have shown how rigid was the notion of John Milton towards women, and also whether or not, it has undergone changes in due course.

I have shown that Tulasi Das and Milton treated women in various ways. Sometimes they rise above our expectations; and sometimes they fall down to an unimaginable depth. They are both terrible and admirable; cruel and kind; and sometimes human and sometimes divine. The most creative feature of female characters in the life of male counterparts is that they motivate them with ideas to work, may be sometimes wrongly, for which they deserve no blame.

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In the fifth chapter I have discussed the two prominent characters, one each of Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas.

These characters represent and lead the hostile elements in the epics and are named as Antagonists in my thesis. Satan is the enemy of God, or rather he treats God as his enemy. This position corresponds to the situation in Ramcaritmanas in which Ravan treats Rama as his enemy. Satan has his origin in the Heaven. Indeed, he was an eminent angel before his fall. He revolted and was punished; and was consequently degenerated. A portion of this chapter deals with the origin and concept of the antagonists. This has required me to have occasional allusions to myths and legends and sometimes to art and sculpture.

While examining them, in the context of Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas, I have dealt with their actions in relation to the Gods whose opponents they are. They have both good and bad aspects, but the instinct and inclination for the latter overpowers them. They possess tremendous physical and mental ability; but it is diverted to selfish and sinful purposes. Both of them are conscious rebels against the Almighty. They assess their success half-heartedly and anticipate only the defeat at the very outset. This is a ridiculous position; and both Satan and Ravan are ridiculed. This has been elaborately discussed by me. Further the two

Antagonists have been examined in relation to their Kiths and Kins also who are already divided in groups. In Ramcaritmanas the majority of the faction is eloquent in reminding Ravan of the awful results that may follow in the event of war with Rama. The group that supports Ravan consists of flatterers and unwise people only. The wise in the camp of Ravan advise him to change his mind and to surrender to Rama for a valid and righteous cause. Such situations are noticed in Paradise Lost also. Another common characteristic of the two Antagonists is their incorrigibility. Ravan and Satan behave like spoiled children on a number of occasions, obstinate to uphold their own views only.

I have in my thesis made an attempt to provoke the scholars in the direction of comparative literature by raising some important issues and examining them with reference to Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas; and I hope to succeed.

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MAY, 1985

D P Singh, M.A., D.Litt.
Pro-Vice-Chancellor(Aizawl Campus)
and
Dean of School of Languages
North Eastern Hill University

I certify that the thesis entitled "A Comparative Study of Milton and Tulasi Das with reference to Rāmcaritmānas and Paradise Lost" by Shri Raj Nath Upadhyay for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, embodies the record of original investigation carried out by him under my supervision. He has been duly registered and the thesis presented is worthy of being considered for the award of Ph. D. Degree. This work has not been submitted for any Degree of any other University.

SHILLONG
The 15th May 1985

D.P. Singh
(D P SINGH)

C O N T E N T S

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SHILLONG
The __________ 1985

(R N UPADHYAY)

PREFACE

To describe in a nut-shell, my thesis on the comparative study of John Milton and Tulasi Das with reference to Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas deals with an investigation into the methods and concept of treatment of similar materials by the two poets, not only of different languages but of two distinct cultures and distant countries also. John Milton, with a very high ambition to produce a great work of doctrinal character, had plunged deep into the studies of all that could be accessible in England and the countries of the continent in various languages. The influences, that worked productively and provocatively in Milton's life, are generally categorized into three classes: (i) Bible and scriptures (ii) works of Homer, Virgil and other poets and thinkers (iii) family, friends and tutors. Tulasi Das was also influenced in the same way by three categories of influences: (i) Vedas and Puranas etc. (ii) Classics like Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Ādhyātma Rāmāyaṇa (iii) Saints and devotees of the contemporary society.

In case of both the poets, a very common and obviously undeniable thing appears. It is the interaction between the religion and the classical culture; in case of Milton, between Christianity on the one hand and Greek and Latin on the other hand, and in case of Tulasi Das, between Hinduism on one side and Sanskrit Classics on the other side. This interaction is so pervasive in both of them that it becomes difficult to separate the two sides with precision. My work, dwelling upon these aspects of Paradise Lost and Ramcaritmanas, attempts to examine how the two poets make use of these materials; how these materials undergo transformation in transit; and what results they ultimately yield in the hands of these poets.

Besides this, I have dealt with two more aspects of their epics, namely the treatment of female characters, and the characterisation and role of antagonists in Paradise Lost and 'Ramcaritmanas', the former aspect to identify and to critically examine the attitudes of Milton and Tulasi Das towards women; and the latter to investigate the conceptual similarities or differences in the delineation of the characters of antagonists in their epics. The female characters whom I have referred to in my dissertation are those

only who represent the correct notion of the poets about women; and the antogonists, for whom I have devoted one full chapter, are Satan and Ravan with their followers.

In the Bibliography I have included the books which have provided me with materials directly in some form or the other. Besides these books, I have included some other books also which have been of great value and have influenced me to a great extent in formulating my views on the poets. In order to easily locate the references quoted from 'Ramcaritmanas' I have mentioned in the foot notes the serial number of 'dohas' or 'sorathas', and the lines following them, 'd' and 's' indicating 'doha' and 'sorath', respectively. Both Ramayana and Valmiki Ramayana refer to the Ramayana written by Valmiki in Sanskrit. In case of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, the title of the poem is followed by the Book and lines.

ABBREVIATION

transliteration

A.K.	:	Ayōdhyā Kāṇḍa
Ar. K.	:	Araṇya Kāṇḍa
B.K.	:	Bālkāṇḍa
B.P.	:	Bhāgawat Purāṇa
C.U.P.	:	Cambridge University Press
Chth	:	Chhanda
d.l.	:	dohā (and the lines following)
K.K.	:	Kiṣhkindhā Kāṇḍa
l.	:	Lines
L.K.	:	Laṅkā Kāṇḍa
O.U.P.	:	Oxford University Press
P.	:	Page
P.L.	:	Paradise Lost
S.	:	Soraṭhā
S.K.	:	Sundar-Kāṇḍa
U.K.	:	Uttar Kāṇḍa

C H A P T E R - I

INTRODUCTION

I began my work with the study of Tulasi Das. His 'Ramcaritmanas' had a great influence on me, and I did not consider my daily routine completed unless I had read a few verses of this book. In the same way I studied, as was required in course of my teaching profession, the works of Milton, particularly *Paradise Lost*. My interest deepened in it with equal respect, and it was at this stage that I became studiously conscious of examining the similarities and differences in treatment of the same concepts by Milton and Tulasī Dās. The subject-matter of my thesis makes it necessary to write an introduction which should not only introduce the contents of the thesis, but also enlighten on the biographical aspects of the two poets. That by itself will reveal why it was considered necessary to write a dissertation on the comparative study of both the poets. John Milton and Tulasi Das are the two voices of human soul in controversial times striving to explore, ventilate and solve many deeper issues of the human race, one in the West and the other in the East. Although there was a gap of about fifty years between the births of John Milton and

Tulasi Das, the states of affairs were not very dissimilar in nature in their respective countries. I shall describe here in brief some important biographical events which will serve as the source of information about both of them and their works.

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In absence of any geneological records of the family of Tulasi Das, the account of his life is built by the scholars on the derivative sources only. This has led the opinions to vary. Some scholars believe that the name of his father was Murari Misra; and he was born at Rajapur in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh. The great-great-grand father of Tulasi Das was Parasuram Misra, who was originally a resident of another village, named Kesayan. Once he had been to Chitrakut, and there as it is said, he had a dream in which Hanuman asked him to go to Rajapur and settle there, where a great poet and devotee of Rama would be born as his great-great-grandson. Parasuram Misra then went to Rajapur and was warmly received by the people there The son of Parasuram Misra was Shankar Misra, who had two sons, namely, Santi Misra and Rudra Misra. Rudra Misra had

four sons, the eldest of whom was Murari Misra, the father of Tulasi Das. W.D.P. Hill holds the view that it was Atma Ram Dube who was the father of Tulasi Das. This opinion is, however, accepted by many scholars and has received popular support also. According to some other scholars Tulasi Das was born at Hajipur near Chitrakut. Sir George Grierson holds that the poet was born at Tari in Doab. There are, and may be, many more opinions also in this connection. But the widely acknowledge place of his birth is Rajapur, which has been authenticated by W.D.P. Hill also.[1] There is no less controversy about the date of birth of Tulasi Das. According to some scholars Tulasi Das was born in 1532 A.D. The other dates of his birth are cited as 1523 A.D., 1527 A.D. and 1543 A.D. by various scholars. W.D.P. Hill has written that Tulasi Das died on Thursday, the 24th July 1623 A.D.[2] In his 'Notes on Tulasi Das' Sir George Grierson has made elaborate calculations to determine the exact dates of birth and death of Tulasi Das from some important events of the life of the poet. In view of these varying opinions it is difficult to say how long was the life of Tulasi Das. The scholars however, seem

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[1] W.D.P. Hill, The Holy Lake of Acts of Rama: Introduction, O.U.P., Calcutta, 1971, p.ix.

[2] Ibid., Introduction, p.x.

to be unanimous to hold the view that the poet lived a long life which might vary from eighty to one hundred years. As regards the place of his death, the scholars are again unanimous; and they hold that the poet died at a bathing-resort, called Assi, on the bank of the Ganges in Varanasi. His house is still preserved and opened once a year for public worship. Another point, which has been also discussed with controversy, relates to the caste of the poet. W.D.P. Hill has accepted him to be a Brahmin Dube of Parāśar 'gotra'. His mother's name has been known as Hulasi, for which there are references in the work of the poet also.

Tulasi Das was born as an unfortunate child. At the time of his birth he had all his teeth, and unlike other children, he did not cry at birth; but uttered the name of Rama, which led the boy to be called "Ram-bola". His father was told by the priest that the child was born under evil stars; and would be the cause of woes to the family. The mother feared that her husband might become desperate and kill the child. She, therefore, gave the child to a maid servant who was very kind to the child. Unfortunately the maid-servant died after some time, and

the father refused to take back the child. Being thus abandoned, Tulasi Das had to live in miseries. He had to beg from door to door in search of bread. In his poem, 'Kavitawali', Tulasi Das has written about his miseries:

> His father and mother brought him into the world and abandoned him.
> Destiny had written nothing good upon his forehead,
> He was low, a vessel for disrespect, a coward
> Who was glad to eat even the scrips
> Thrown out for dogs.[3]

He was later adopted by a devotee of Rama, who was known as Narhari Dās. It was he, who gave the name 'Tulasi Das' to the child who was till then called 'Rambola'. Narhari Das described the stories of Rama, as available in Ramayanas and other books, to Tulasi Das.

After sometime, Tulasi Das travelled to Varanasi; and studied Vedas, Vedangas, philosophy and Puranas. He studied 'Ramayana' of Valmiki in original Sanskrit language. Having spent a period of over fifteen years in scholarly pursuits at Varanasi, Tulasi Das returned to his native

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[3] Edmour J. Babineau: Love of God and Social Duty in the Ramcaritmanas, Motilal Banarasi Dass, Delhi, 1979, p.7.

village. He had acquired deep knowledge of scriptures and history. The great scholar having reached his village was shocked to find that his father had passed away; and the house in which the poet was born had disappeared. There is a group of scholars, of course, who hold the view that there is baseless exaggeration about the early life of Tulasi, as regards the misfortunes and miseries. They say that the father of Tulasi Das, despite his financial stringency, had never abandoned him. When Tulasi Das had returned from Varanasi, his father arranged for his marriage with a girl named Ratnawali, the daughter of Deenbandhu Pathak. Ratnawali herself died after sometime. Her father arranged for the second marriage of Tulasi Das which also ended with the death of his wife, all too soon. No further details are available about it. Tulasi Das was again married for the third time with a girl named Buddhimati, the daughter of Lakshman Upadhyay, a resident of Kanchanpur. This wife was an educated and beautiful lady. It is said that the father of Tulasi Das had taken dowry also for the marriages of his son to make the marriages an important and honourable event in the family. After this his father died. It is this event of the death of his father which Tulasi Das has referred to in his

'Kavitawali' as being abandoned by his father and mother after having been brought up by them into the world. These scholars say that the incident has generally been misinterpreted to build up a pitiable legend on the life of Tulasi Das. The words of Tulasi Das were intended not to describe the occurrence of any voluntary abandonment by the parents by way of accusation, but to express his humility as a refugee to Rama, whom he considered to be the supreme father and mother after his parents had died away. There is no evidence except the passing poetical references of this nature to establish that Tulasi Das was not born and brought up, and also married, under the care of his father. There are several occasions in Ramcaritmanas, where Tulasi Das has described the sweet and ideal relation between the son and the parent. He had experienced it in his own life also. The subject remains a topic for perhaps unresolved controversy. But it can safely be commented that most of the derogatory things about the life of the great poet were the creation of his opponents while he was at Varanasi in the midst of hostility and critical confrontations from the orthodox Brahmins of the age.

Tulasi Das was very fond of his wife. His affection

had grown so deep that he could never think of life without her. One day Tulasi Das had been out and the brother of his wife came to see her. She accompanied her brother to her native village. When Tulasi Das returned home he did not find his wife and felt very sorry. According to some scholars, this was Ratnawali, his first and the only wife. According to others, this was Buddhimati, the third wife of Tulasi Das. There is, however, no difference of opinion about the events that followed. Tulasi Das, having learnt from his neighbours that his wife had gone away to her native village, went out at once to meet her. He reached the village of his wife and found her there. There are interesting controversies on how he reached the village. Some scholars say, he had crossed a furious river at night by swimming. Some say that he sat on a floating dead body in the river, and sailed to the other side of the river to reach the village. According to the social custom it was not liked by the people of the village that a husband should visit his wife in this manner. His wife was also annoyed at his conduct. When Tulasi Das met her she scolded him thus:

> Are you not asham'd, running you have come
> O husband! what shall I say? This love I spurn
> So much love as you show for me

A body of bones and skin
If you show for Rama, the Lord
The fear of rebirth shall touch you not.[4]

This gave a shocking retort to Tulasi Das. Infinite repentance followed at his own amorous conduct. His eyes become wide open, for he was too blind in love for her. A miraculous change occurred, and he left the place at once without speaking a word. His wife realized how seriously her husband had taken her words. She felt that Tulasi Das would, perhaps, return no more. Having reached Varanasi, he stayed on the bank of the holy Ganges meditating on Rama. This was the beginning of his spiritual career. Then he visited many places of pilgrimage, including Ayodhya, Vrindaban, Prayag and Chitrakut.

While residing on the bank of the Ganges, Tulasi Das used to go out for his morning prayers on the other side of the river. He used to pour some water from his jar daily at the root of a tree. That tree was the abode of a ghost. One day it so happened that Tulasi Das had no water left in his jar to pour there. He silently stood

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[4] W.D.P. Hill; The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama: Introduction, O.U.P., Calcutta, 1971, p.x.

there, and began to pay respect to the tree. A voice was then heard saying, "O Saint! I am pleased with you. Speak, what do you want? I must help you." Tulasi Das replied, "O gentle brother, I desire to see Rama, my beloved Lord. You may help me if you can." The ghost said, "I am a ghost, a cursed and condemned being, prohibited to glance at holy things. I can not show Rama myself; but I shall tell you how you may succeed in fulfilling your desire. There is a place, called Karnghanta, where a discourse on Ramayana is held every day. A crowd assembles there to participate in the discourse. In that crowd there is a leper also who comes to hear the discourse. He sits at the corner, and does not leave unless all have gone away after the discourse. This leper is Hanuman himself, the favourite devotee of Rama. You must approach him and he will enable you to see Rama." Tulasi Das went to Karnghanta and found everything as the ghost had spoken to him. After the discourse was over and all the people had dispersed, Tulasi Das followed the leper. When he found the leper alone, he clasped his feet. Hanuman tried to persuade him to go away, and a leper as he was, not to touch him. Tulasi Das paid no heed to it and continued to show his faith and reverence. Hanuman was ultimately pleased and revealed his

true self. He said, "O Tulasi! you may now go to Chitrakut and pray to Lord Shiva there. After six months you will succeed and your desire shall be fulfilled."

Tulasi Das, accordingly, went to Chitrakut and began to worship Shiva. One day while passing through the forest, he beheld two handsome and peerless princes, riding on horses with arrows and bows in their hands. Their unique beauty filled the mind of Tulasi Das with rapture. He had never seen such princes before. After they had disappeared Hanuman presented himself in the disguise of a Brahmin and asked Tulasi Das if he had seen anything on his way. Tulasi Das described the princes he had seen and Hanuman then told him that they were Rama and Lakshman. Tulasi Das became very sorry at his ignorance. Hanuman disappeared. On another day Tulasi Das came by chance to behold a 'Ram Lila' with Rama, Lakshman, Seeta and many of the followers of Rama. The performance referred to the conquest of Lanka by Rama and his coronation as the King of Ayodhya. It was a marvellous scene, and Tulasi Das was fully absorbed in watching the performance. After everything was over, Hanuman appeared in the form of a Brahmin, and asked Tulasi Das if he had seen anything in the forest. Tulasi Das narrated

the beatific vision of Ram Lila and said that it was a wonderful sight. Hanuman said that the Ram Lila was performed to enable him to have a vision of Rama; and that was not the normal season for Ram Lila which should occur in either September or October only. Tulasi Das was again sorry, and regretted his failure deeply in recognizing his Lord. Hanuman consoled him, and said that in the dark age of 'Kali', which is full of evils, Rama could not be seen directly. Yet another incident followed when Tulasi Das was preparing sandal paste to worship the idol of Rama at Chitrakur. Suddenly Rama appeared in the form of a handsome child, and said to him, "O Saint, apply the sandal paste to my forehead also." Tulasi Das looked at the child and fell in rapture. He forgot himself totally, and could not move his hands even. The child took the paste himself and put it on his own forehead. He applied it to the forehead of Tulasi Das also. In the meantime, Hanuman who was watching the whole scene, sitting on the branch of a tree, spoke these words:

> At the bathing resort of Chitrakut,
> Many saits had assembled
> Tulasi Das prepared sandal paste
> And Rama applied to his forehead.[5]

whose tr.?

[5] Ramcaritmanas, 43rd ed. Samvat 2041, Gita Press Gorakhpur, Introduction p.2.

This was to enable Tulasi Das to recognize Rama. Suddenly the sight disappeared.

There are some other interesting events which are popularly acknowledged to have occurred in the life of Tulasi Das. In India popular traditions have played very important role; and many valuable informations have thus been bequeathed to the succeeding generations. Indians hold the tradition in high esteem, and do not disregard, or dismiss the ideas derived from them by saying that they are merely fiction. A great deal of truth underlies these traditions. Scholars have mainly to depend on such traditions in order to discover facts about the life and works of Tulasi Das. Since Tulasi Das had left home in search of Rama, his endeavours had been to serve and adore Rama and his devotees. He began to write poems in Sanskrit in praise of Rama. These poems, written in day, vanished at night. He became worried and prayed to Shiva, who appeared in a dream and bade him write in Hindi; and assured that the work would become immortal. Tulasi Das, accordingly, began to write the poem in Hindi to celebrate the glory of Rama which he named as 'Ramcaritmanas'. He began the work

at Ayodhya, the birth place of Rama, while staying there. The date and the place of its beginning have been described by the poet in 'Ramcaritmanas'.[6]

Tulasi Das by the virtue of his devotion to Rama had aehieved transcendental realization. His name was remembered by all with reverence. A Brahmin widow had once come to Tulasi Das with the dead body of her husband and begun to cry. Her pitiable sight moved Tulasi Das. He touched the dead body while reciting the name of Rama, and the dead body was restored to life. This news was conveyed to Akbar, the emperor. Tulasi Das was summoned to Delhi and asked by Akbar to perform some miracles. The poet humbly said that he did not know any miracle. He was a humble servant of Rama only. The emperor was offended and ordered the poet to be imprisoned at once. Tulasi Das prayed to Hanuman and Hanuman sent innumerable monkeys who began to create troubles in and around the palace of Akbar. The emperor then visited the prison, and at once released the poet with due honour. He fell at his feet; and Hanuman then withdrew all the monkeys.

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[6] _Ramcaritmanas_, B.K., ll. 33d, 5-8.

There was another incident of a thief entering the house of Tulasi Das at night. The thief entered the house and collected the belongings of Tulasi Das. He had nothing but a few utensils and little clothes, just enough to cover his body. The thief wanted to take away all that from the house of the poet. As he came out, he found that two young and brave princes, one fair and one dark, were guarding the house of Tulasi Das. They had arrows and bows in their hands. The thief was frightened, for he understood that they were Rama and Lakshman. He fell at the feet of Tulasi Das, and begged of his pardon. Tulasi Das came out and found none. He realized that it was Rama who was giving him all kinds of protection, while keeping himself awake all the night. Tulasi Das was pained at this thought; and he gave away all his belongings to the poor with the hope that Rama would thus not be troubled any more at night. The thief also became his disciple and began to worship Rama.

One day a murderer visited Varanasi begging for alms, reciting the name of Rama. He was doing so in order to be absolved of his sins. Tulasi Das took him to his house and gave him consecrated food to eat. After that he

declared him as purified and sang the glory of Rama. The orthodox Brahmins, and they were very large in number, were offended; and challenged Tulasi Das to justify his action. To grant purification to a murderer was an inconceivable idea in those days. It was debated and decided by all the Brahmins that if Nandi, the bull of Shiva, would be pleased to eat the food from the hands of the murderer the action of Tulasi Das would be considered as justified. The man was taken to the temple where he offered food to the Bull and it was astonishing to behold the Bull eating the food. This incident led to the conversion of thousands of people to the cult of Tulasi Das, the path of devotion. The 'Kaliyug' was terribly offended and appeared in person before Tulasi Das. He threatened to devour him up, if he did not stop his teachings and acts of devotion to Rama. Tulasi Das then prayed to Hanuman. Hanuman advised him to write a poem of prayers for Rama and said that he would get it sanctioned by Rama to serve as a defence against 'Kaliyug'. He told him also that there was no other way to get rid of Kaliyug, for Kaliyug was the king and had the authority to rule over the people of his age. Tulasi Das wrote a poem which was named as 'Vinay-Patrika'.

It is said that in old age Tulasi Das happened to visit the village of his wife who had once reproached him for loving her blindly. He halted at the same house and began to cook. His wife whom he did not recognize gave him rice, fuel and vegetables. A little later she recognized him but did not disclose her identity. She offered him pepper, camphor and salt; but Tulasi Das said that he had them all with him. In the morning she disclosed everything and offered to accompany him, but he refused to accept her proposal. She rebuked him again for collecting pepper, camphor and salt but not taking her with him.[7]

RĀMCARITMĀNAS

Tulasi Das begins the work with prayers to all the gods, sages, saints, poets, philosophers and finally the whole universe considering it as the manifestation of Rama and Seeta. He prays even to the wicked, that they may be pleased to abstain from creating obstructions in his work. He considers his 'Ramcaritmanas' a pious work; and compared to the enormous magnitude of the planned book, he finds his

[7]W.D.P. Hill, The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama, Introduction, O.U.P., Calcutta, 1971, p.xi.

talent totally inadequate. He hopes that only the God, whose glory he wishes to celebrate, may help him. After this he describes the marriage of Shiva and Parvati and some other legends relevant to the birth of Rama. Dasrath, the King of Ayodhya, has three queens but no son. The names of his three queens are Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyee in order of seniority. Dasrath expresses his grief to Vashistha, the priest, who advises him to perform a yajna, for acquiring son. He does it and gets four sons who are named as Rama, Bharat, Lakshman and Satruhan. Rama and Bharat are dark; and Lakshman and Satruhan fair. When the children have become adolescent and acquired education, Vishwamitra, a high sage, visits the palace of Dasrath, and asks him to allow his two sons, Rama and Lakshman, to accompany him to his hermitage to remove the menace, regularly caused by the notorious demons. Rama and Lakshman then follow the sage and kill Tadaka, Subahu and many of the other demons. Later Vishwamitra takes them to Janakpur, and on his way to Janakpur, Rama grants salvation to Adh Ahilya, the cursed wife of Gautam. At Janakpur they join a 'Swayamvar' which has been declared to be held for the marriage of Seeta, the daughter of Janak. A bow which is

known as the bow of Shiva, is to be lifted. The person who can do this shall marry Seeta. All the Kings who have assembled there fail to move the bow even a little. On his turn Rama succeeds, to the amazement of all. Parasuram, the legendary foe of kings and embodiment of terror, comes to the place. After an interesting scene and dialogue with Lakshman and Rama he agrees to accept the supremacy of Rama. Seeta is married to Rama, which is followed by the marriages of all the brothers of Rama in the same family of Janak with the princesses. This is the story of the first canto of 'Ramcaritmanas' and Tulasi Das gives it the title Bal-Kand.

In the second canto, named Ayodhya-Kanda, conflicts of domestic rivalry occur in the family of Dasrath. Dasrath proposes to crown Rama as the King of Ayodhya and to retire himself. Kaikeyee, having been persuaded by Manthara, a maid-servant, decides to mar the celebration; and demands that Rama should be sent to forest to dwell there for fourteen years and Bharat crowned as the King of Ayodhya. Dasrath receives a shock; and ultimately dies. Bharat is not in Ayodhya when these events happen. He is at the native place of his mother, Kaikeyee. Vashistha sends for him at once. Bharat returns to Ayodhya, which looks deserted, and he is

shocked deeply to hear what has happened in his absence. Rama, Lakshman and Seeta have already left for the forest, and Dasrath for the Heaven. He finds that his mother is the principal cause of all these calamities, and rebukes her for her mischievous conduct. In stead of accepting the crown he decides to leave for the forest in search of Rama, Lakshman and Seeta. He takes his trusted followers also with him. Rama receives them in the forest with utmost courtesy and kindness. He consoles Bharat and persuades him to obey the will of their father; and asks him to return to Ayodhya to look after the subject and the family for fourteen years. He assures him of his return to Ayodhya at the end of the period. Bharat asks for the wooden sandal of the feet of Rama, which Rama gives him with pleasure and love. Bharat returns to Ayodhya, worships the sandal of Rama and spends his days like an ascetic doing penance on the outskirts of the city. He lives a severe life at home as Rama lives in the forest.

The third canto is named as Aranya-Kanda. Rama meets sages and saints at various places of the forest and then settles down at Panchawati. Supnakha, the sister of Ravan, happens to see Rama and is fascinated by his grace.

She offers to marry him, but Rama sends her to Lakshman. Lakshman sends her back to Rama, saying that Rama is the Lord and he is his servant only. Supnakha feels insulted and becomes enraged. Lakshman chops her nose and ears off. She rushes back to Khar and Dusan, her brave brothers. They declare war and are themselves killed by Rama. Supnakha then goes to Ravan and arouses him to vengeance. Ravan goes to Mareech and asks him to become a golden deer to tempt Seeta. Mareech very reluctantly obeys Ravan. Seeta beholds the deer with golden spots on its body. She expresses her desire to get the skin of the deer. Rama goes away chasing the deer, who runs very fast to take Rama far away. Being ultimately hit by the arrow of Rama, he reveals his real form and cries out 'O Lakshman!' The voice is heard by Seeta; who asks Lakshman to run to Rama's help believing that Rama is in trouble. Ravan finds Seeta alone, forcibly puts her in his chariot, and drives away. Rama returns with Lakshman having killed Mareech. They find Seeta missing, and frantically search for her; but to no avail. This is followed by the fourth and fifth cantos named respectively as Kishkindha-Kanda and Sundar-Kanda. They meet Hanuman who introduces them to Sugreeva who has been driven away by his brother, named Bali, the

King of Kishkindha and of the monkeys. Rama kills Bali and crowns Sugreeva as the King of monkeys. Sugreeva sends out all the monkeys in search of Seeta. Hanuman crosses over the sea and meets Seeta. Having heard the sorrows of Seeta, and having talked to her, he sets the city of Ravana on fire. When he returns to Rama with the news of Seeta he is received with overwhelming gratitude by Rama. A bridge is constructed and the army of monkeys and bears march on. Here is the beginning of Lanka-Kanda. Rama has crossed the sea, and now he sends Angad, the son of Bali, to the court of Ravan as his envoy to honourably ask him to return Seeta. A very interesting dialogue takes place between Angad and Ravan; and the latter is humiliated in his own court by Angad. Ravan, too proud as he is, does not care for insults and in an attempt to ridicule Angad is himself ridiculed. Ultimately a war is declared and the demons are killed including Kumbhkaran and Meghnad, the most mighty ones. Last of all, Ravan is killed; whose fall is followed by hymns of praise to celebrate the victory of Rama. Vibhisan, who has earlier defected from the camp of Ravan in spite of being his own brother, is enthroned as the King of Lanka. In the meantime, fourteen

years have passed away. In the last canto, namely, the Uttarkand, Rama returns to Ayodhya with Seeta, Lakshman and a host of his monkey supporters. They stay in Ayodhya for some time with Rama. Rama is crowned formally and Ayodhya returns to a new life of peace, prosperity and harmony. Rama gives a touching send off to the monkeys who with reluctance return home. Hanuman only stays back with Rama. The last part of the canto deals with the origin of the story of 'Ramcaritmanas' and philosophical discourses.

I I

The life of John Milton has been written in a number of books, and his career has been shown as eventful in all of them. The opinions do not vary in respect of the date and place of birth of John Milton. There is no uncertainty about the information regarding his parentage and friends also. But the opinions vary widely about the political, literary, religious, educational and philosophical ideologies of Milton. They have been discussed for centuries; and Milton has had both supporters and opponents. But the events, through ages, have led only to the enhancement rather than

waning of his fame. In spite of all that can be said about the complexity and toughness of the subject-matter of his works, it can not be denied that Milton has become more readable and understandable in the modern time. His stature has attained an imperishable eminence; and his works have drawn innumerable scholars to explore new and useful informations for the posterity. I have dealt with certain aspects of Milton's Paradise Lost in the following chapters with a view to making a comparative study with Ramcaritmanas of Tulasi Das. Here I propose to write in brief only about the life of John Milton in order to enable the interested readers to have a glance at his life, whose work I have made a topic for my thesis.

Milton was born in 1608 in a Protestant bourgeois and cultured family. His great-grand father and grand-father were Roman Catholics but his father became a Puritan Anglican. The grand-father of the poet had expelled John Milton, the elder, from his house. It was done because the poet's father had become a Bible-reading Protestant which could not be tolerated by the old school. The father of the poet had come to London twenty five years

before John Milton, the poet, was born. He was a successful scrivener who had prospered to make enough money for himself and his children. The profession was primarily of legal nature and also usury to some extent. By 1632 John Milton, the elder, had retired after setting up his younger son, Christopher, as a lawyer. But he was in a position to provide his elder son, John Milton, with all kinds of opportunities for good education, including expenses for his continental tour for fifteen months. Milton, the poet, did not like the involvement of his family in business-like legal profession. After the father of the poet had retired to rural Horton, the younger Christopher Milton inherited some of the functions of his father, particularly of collecting debt for his clients. He had inherited some of his father's property. These things required one to be a little too much of worldly pursuits, Milton, the poet, disliked and frequently expressed his disapproval of the view of his brother. The legal profession was never his choice nor it could yield a desirable result in his uniquely chosen career to become a great poet. But Milton, however, never hesitated to seek and apply the legal process to enforce what he believed to be his rights. He possessed an extensive and remarkable knowledge of the law. Milton did not like the

profession of law or usury, but he maintained a good relation with his parents, who were interested and involved in this job. The poet actively questioned ethical credibility of usury; but was passively reconciled to himself to think that, after all, it was lawful. He deemed it wise to maintain silence in order to keep the balance, at least for the time being. The other topic, on which the poet disagreed with his father, was the proposal for Milton's joining the Church if he did not like law. Milton's father, himself being a lover of music who had composed poems and participated in "The Triumphs of Oriana", a tribute to queen Elizabeth, became amenable to discussion when his elder son had decided otherwise. His only apprehension was, as it was often thought, that poetic career would not yield regular income and it might make Milton poor. The thirty-one year old Milton was provided with money for a tour to Italy by his father even though it was not certain that John Milton would flourish in his career as a poet. This shows that the differences in the family of Milton were of the nature of mutual deliberations involving the genuine appreciation of common interest. This bore a benign influence on the poet in developing an intensively

cultured outlook. This served as a boon to Milton; for he could cultivate the capacity to review the past, to screen it and then to produce something relevant in his works by way of synthesis. What was the matter with his family was not fanaticism but the need for personal independence, which enabled, the poet to write verses which were considered marvellous when he was about ten years old; and he was thence-forward brought up deliberately to be a man of genius. A colossal pride must have been latent in a family where such a thing was accepted as normal. Milton's mother was also of equally great influence. Not much is known about her, except that she was the daughter of a London merchant, and had been a widow before she married the father of Milton. Perhaps she had weak eyes; and it is said that Milton inherited his blindness partly from her. She was rich and charitable and her soothing generosity had deep influence on Milton in his childhood.

Some of the other influences and contacts which Milton had were of varying nature. Interestingly enough, it is found that the people with whom he happened to have

acquaintances were not of his age. The records show that his relationships were mainly with tutors, such as Alexander Gill, his Headmaster at St. Pauls; Thomas Young, his extra-private tutor; the librarian of the Bodeleian Library, Oxford; and Charles Diodati whom he met at St. Pauls. The influences of Richard Stock, the rector of his parish, were obviously of some value to Milton. Milton was to repudiate many of the views of Stock, on polygamy, divorce, purpose of marriage and so on. But Stock's preachings may have started Milton thinking on some of these topics. One of the views of Stock which became acceptable to Milton was that man should be charitable to himself and his family as well as to others. While at Cambridge, it is said, Milton had some trouble with the college authorities which resulted in his rustication for a short period. The nature of his offence is not properly explained; but it seems to be more of ideological than personal character.

Milton's life was full of serious, yet interesting, events. Even in his private life he has a record of marrying thrice, once before and twice after becoming blind. To describe the political, literary, social, religious

and educational controversies, that involved him and evolved from him, will be a long and perhaps unnecessary attempt for my purpose here. Before I end, I may only say that even in his last years he had the serenity of mind. In spite of his ill-health, and massive ideological pressure on his brain, he used to go for a walk, though blind. He used to receive distinguished visitors courteeusly. His daughters had left him alone; but he blamed them not, for he considered himself to be responsible for it. He died probably on November 8, 1674. All the dates and events of his life are authenticated by documents, except ironically enough, the date and time of his death. It is said that he died with so little pain or emotion that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room. Paradise Lost is his immortal document of a great and revolutionary age for the posterity.

PARADISE LOST

The epic is written in twelve cantos and each canto is named as Book. In Book I, Milton introduces the whole subject, Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed. Then he describes the cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the

serpent, who revolting from God and drawing to his side many angels, was driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great Deep. There after Satan is presented with his fallen angels into Hell, a place of utter darkness. Satan calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him. They are shown as lying on a burning Lake, thunder-struck. They confer their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions who lay till then confounded. They rise and Satan addresses them, comforts them with new hopes yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be placed therein according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven. To find out the truth of this prophecy and to determine thereon he refers to a full council. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the Deep. The infernal peers then sit in Council. In Book II the consultations begin. Satan debates whether an other battle be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven. Some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred to search the truth of the prophecy in Heaven concerning the creation of another world and another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves. They suppose this must have

happened by this time. Satan undertakes alone the voyage, is applauded and honoured, for all others are reluctant and diffident. The Council ends, and all engage themselves, according to their inclinations, in horrible employments available there to pass away the time till Satan returns. Satan passes on his journey to Hell Gates, finds them shut and frightfully guarded. When the gates are opened he discovers the great Gulf between Hell and Heaven. With difficulties he passes through directed by Chaos, the power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought. In Book III God, with his son sitting at his right, is shown on the throne. He sees Satan flying towards the newly created world. He foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind, clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputations, having created Man free and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares his purpose of Grace towards him in case he falls not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards Man. The God again declares that the Grace can not be extended towards Man without the satisfaction of Divine Justice. Man has offended the majesty of God by aspiring to God-hood

and therefore with all his progeny must die unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence. The son of God freely offers himself, the Father accepts him and ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in Heaven and Earth, commands all the angels to adore him which is done. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost Orb, where wandering he first finds a place called the Limbo of Vanity. He comes to the Gates of Heaven. On his way to the Orb of the sun he finds Uriel, the regent of the Orb, but changes himself first into the shape of a meaner angel. He pretends to have a desire to behold the new creation and Man whom God had placed there. He inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed. He alights first on Mount Niphates. In Book IV Satan, confounded with conflicting emotions, enters into Paradise. He wonders at the excellence of beauty of Adam and Eve and their happy state, overhears their discourse and gathers that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat under the penalty of death. He plans to seduce them to transgress. Meanwhile, Uriel descending on a sun-beam warns Gabriel, that some evil spirit escaped the Deep and in the shape of a good

Angel came down to Paradise. Gabriel promises to find him out before the dawn. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest. Gabriel, drawing forth his Bands of Night watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's Bower, lest the Evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve, sleeping. They find Satan there at the ears of Eve, tempting her in a dream. They bring him to Gabriel who questions him but is scornfully answered and resisted. Obstructed by a sign from Heaven he flies out of Paradise. In Book V Eve relates her troublesome dream to Adam who likes it not and comforts her. God, to render Man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand. Raphael comes down to Paradise and is greeted and entertained by Adam and Eve. They discourse at table and Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy, relates who that enemy is and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven and the occasion thereof. In Book VI, Raphael relates how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his angels and how on the third day in spite of their terrible resistance Satan and his legions were driven out,

deep down with horror and confusion into the place of their punishment by Messiah. Book VII describes the creation of the world in six days. In Book VIII Adam inquires concerning celestial motions and is doubtfully answered by Raphael. Raphael exhorts him to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam asserts and still desirous to detain Raphael relates to him what he remembered since his own creation, his placing in Paradise, his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society and his first meeting and nuptial with Eve. After repeated admonitions Raphael departs.

In Book IX Satan, who had earlier withdrawn for a while from the Paradise, returns with meditated guile as a mist by night into Paradise and enters into a sleeping serpent. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their works which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart. Adam does not consent apprehending the danger, lest that enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt finding her alone. Eve feels insolent at the thought and feels desirous of giving a trial of her strength. She insists on going apart and Adam yields at last. The serpent finds her alone. He approaches in

a subtle manner, first ggazing, then speakling with flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve wonders and asks the serpent how he attained human speech. The serpent answers that by tasting the fruit of a certain Tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason. Eve requests him to bring her to that Tree and finds it to be the same forbidden Tree of knowledge. The serpent grows bolder, and with wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat the fruit. Eve is pleased with the taste and deliberates whether to impart thereof to Adam or not. She brings the fruit at last to Adam, relates to him what persuaded her to eat it. Adam, shocked and amazed, perceives her lot and resolves through vehemence of love to perish with her and eats the fruit. The consciousness of their nakedness grows now in them and they begin to cover the hitherto uncared for parts of their bodies. Further, they begin to quarrel and accuse each other also. In Book X the guardian angels forsake Paradise and return up to Heaven. God declares that the entrance of Satan could not be prevented by them. He sends his son to judge the transgressor. The Son descends and awards sentence accordingly. He takes pity and clothes them both and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at

the Gates of Hell, resolve to sit no longer there confined to Hell, but to follow Satan upto the place of Man. They pave a broad high way or bridge over Chaos according to the track that Satan first made to make the way easier from Hell to this world. Satan arrives at Pandemonium and relates with boastings his success against Man; but in stead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise. They are deluded with a show of forbidden Tree springing up before them; they, greedily reaching to eat the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. God fortells the final victory of his Son over sin and death. Adam more and more perceiving his fallen state heavily bewails and rejects the condolence of Eve. She persists and at length appeases him. To evade the curse likely to fall on their off-spring she proposes to Adam violent ways which he does not approve. He puts in her mind the hope of a late promise that her seed should be revenged on the serpent and exhorts her with him to seek Peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication. In Book XI the Son of God presents to his Father the prayer of our

first parents, now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise. He sends Michael with a band of Cherubin to dispossess them after revealing the future things. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs. He discerns Michael and goes out to meet him. The Angel speaks out their departure and Eve laments. Adam pleads but submits. The Angel leads him upto a high hill, sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood. In Book XII Miehael continues from the flood to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain, who that seed of the woman shall be, which was promised, his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, the state of the Church till his second coming. Adam greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises descends the Hill with Michael, waken's Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quickness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubin taking their stations to guard the place.

I I I

What may be of general common interest for the scholars in both of these poems i.e. 'Ramcaritmanas' and Paradise Lost may be guessed even at a first hand reading of these books, the long narrative style, the multiplicity of myths and traditions, the ideologies involving many values of human society and the panormic view of a landscape full of gods and demons; serpents, animals, trees, lakes, mountains and flowers. These, of course, have not been primarily the concern of my thesis. I have taken up a subject-matter of comparative approach to different aspects of some important issues in which the past and present were synthesized in literary models by the poets. How Tulasi Das and Milton have drawn from their traditions and how they have presented them with alterations, additions and combinations of many complex problems making everything relevant to the contemporary society. Both the poets have similar approach in adding their own contribution to what was already existent while striving for the great human cause. If any one tries to find out anything other than this, I am afraid, he may be searching in vain. Being a comparative study my thesis dwells upon the methods of approach to some common issues and ideologies with which the two poets were deeply concerned in

their epics. Far from reviewing all the aspects I have selected only a few of them and have attempted to identify the spheres in which the views of the two great poets may be examined in the same ways. If anything new emerges out of my work I must consider my attempt amply awarded. The poets may be better understood when read together than in isolation, and I have brought them closer to each other in my work. 'Ramcaritmanas' and Paradise Lost are both doctrinal to a nation. Not only that, they are prophetic too. They are great memoirs of those values on which the society and its civilization are erected. They exhibit the literary, theological, philosophical, political and social trends of their age. There is scope on every one of these for the scholars to write useful books. The moment one has made himself familiar with Milton's God, one feels tempted to think of Tulasi's Ram also. I have also, now and then, fallen into this temptation in my thesis.

The works of the two poets being in two different languages, present a problem of reading and recitation, I have read the works of John Milton and I have read the works of Tulasi Das, both in the languages in which they

were written. The problems of getting synonymous expression have been always difficult to solve and I have now and then faced the same problem which may have resulted in weakening the emphasis on certain points. I have quoted the verses of Tulasi Das in English translation taken primarily from my own unpublished scripts of 'Ramcaritmanas'. Since I had completed the translation of 'Ramcaritmanas' before I started my research on this comparative study, it became easy for me to take quotations at ease from whatever part of the epic I needed. There are certain words, even verses, in 'Ramcaritmanas', which being read in Hindi may give two or even more meanings. While selecting such words and verses in translation only one meaning can be derived. My quotations, therefore, are not likely to create confusion. I have chosen the most popularly accepted meanings of such words and verses for my purpose. There may be variations in spelling of names of proper nouns and I must say, it is due to the differences in phonetics of the two languages. Ram, Ramayan, Bharat and Seeta may be written as Rama, Ramayana, Bharata and Sita also which are acceptable to the scholars. In my reading of Paradise Lost and borrowing quotations from it there has not been any difficulty. This is because my thesis is

written in English which is the language of Paradise Lost also.

I have based my study mainly on the poetical works of John Milton edited by Helen Derbishire ed. 1958 and published by Oxford University Press, New York, Toronto, and 'Ramcaritmanas' published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

CHAPTER-II

SOURCES AND HANDLINGS IN PARADISE LOST AND RAMCARITMANAS

The greatness of a poet is not affected automatically by the borrowing of materials. Shakespeare was seldom original in his plots. He based his imperishable empire mainly on borrowed materials. The greatness may be of many kinds. The one of them is how remarkably and with what distinction a poet transforms his borrowed materials to his own purposes. This is how I propose to examine Tulasi Das and Milton in respect of 'Ramcaritmanas' and 'Paradise Lost', Both the poets were born with a very rich literary, philosophical and religious tradition behind them. This tradition in India had been preserved in Sanskrit, and Tulasi Das plunged deep into it to comprehend the essence of the whole tradition before he began to write 'Ramcaritmanas'. He found his aspired work tremendously disproportionate to his talent and said:

> The deeds of Rama I desire to tell
> But my talent is small and his acts are boundless
> . . . .
> My wisdom is low but ambition is lofty.[1]

whose tr.?

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[1] *Ramcaritmanas*, B.K., 11, 7d, 9-13.

The profoundity of the subject matter of 'Ramcaritmanas' bears testimony to the need of deep study of tradition on which the poet endeavoured to build his literary empire. John Milton also faced the similar problem in his endeavour to produce 'Paradise Lost' in order to make it "doctrinal" to a nation. He depended for his materials on ancient works, and the works of his predecessors, both of England and of the continental countries of rich culture. He studied many languages including Latin, Greek, French, Italian and Hebrew. The knowledge of these languages enabled Milton to acquire materials from various literary and religious works of great poets, prophets and reformers of the continent. Whereas the character and nature of the traditions of the two poets were different, their approach was identical in many respects to their respective traditions. To discuss now in detail I shall begin with Tulasi Das.

The obscurity and unauthenticity of the ancient works of India makes the task of scholars always difficult to ascertain with accuracy the chronology and the authorship of the works available in Sanskrit. In spite of this, a first hand reliable and convenient classification of the ancient works may be made for the purpose of this work.

Thus we may divide the period in Vedic, Puranic and classical ages. Tulasi Das, like any other Brahmin scholar of his age, studied Sanskrit literature extensively. In writing 'Ramcaritmanas' he makes use of the knowledge he derived from his studies. To speak in general, there is no occasion of great importance in 'Ramcaritmanas' when Tulasi Das does not refer to Vedas and Puranas. In fact he takes the Vedic doctrine, and the Puranic sanction to the ways of human life, as the supreme and unquestionable authority of the society. He foresees disaster in deviation from these principles. His views on the ethics of family, society, state and religion are Vedic and Puranic oriented and 'Ramcaritmanas' embodies this concept of the poet. The influence of the Vedic and Puranic scriptures on Tulasi Das appears in many spheres. The place of sacrifice and the performance of penance in human life has been repeatedly stressed by the poet in 'Ramcaritmanas'. The former is predominantly a Vedic, and the latter a Puranic concept. I shall now deal with them by turn.

The Vedic age for all purposes was basically the age of sacrifices. The concept of sacrifice has received continually an honoured recognition in 'Ramcaritmanas'.

Sacrifices are treated as means for fulfilling the desires and achieving victory in war. For a section of people they are treated as routine affairs for self purification. Dasrath is advised by Vashistha to perform a particular kind of sacrifice to get sons. Being aggrieved when he meets Vashistha Tulasi Das says:

> The king felt deeply aggrieved at heart once,
> As he thought he had no son,
> He went to the house of guru at once,
> Bowed to his feet and paid reverence;
> He described all his joys and grief,
> Vashistha spoke and gave relief:
> Have patience, four sons you will have
> Renown'd in the world, devotees' fear who will redress,
> Sage Sringi then Vashistha summoned
> And performed holy sacrifice for son.[2]

The desire of Dasrath is fulfilled, and he gets four sons. This is the beginning of the story of 'Ramcaritmanas'. At the very outset Tulasi Das has accepted the belief in the efficacy of sacrifices in the exalted Vedic form. In Lanka-Kand of 'Ramcaritmanas' Meghnad takes resort to this practice when he finds the enemy hard to conquer. He runs away

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[2] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 188 d etc.

from the battle-field and begins to perform sacrifice to achieve victory:

The demons were deeply frightened;
They fled away and on the fortress mounted.
The swoon of Meghnad was over
Ashamed he was to behold his father;
He decided to perform sacrifice for triumph
And entered into a holy mountain cave at once.
On the other hand Vibhisan thought of advice
He said, 'Listen, O Lord of matchless mercy and might!
Unholy sacrifice Meghnad performs,
A wicked sorcerer and tormenter of gods
O Lord! if this sacrifice is completed
Meghnad shall not quickly be defeated.[3]

Meghnad is, therefore, not allowed to complete the sacrifice. The practice of sacrifices used for self-purification is mentioned in 'Bal-Kand of 'Ramcaritmanas' where Vishwamitra is described as being troubled by the demons. Rama and Lakshman guard the sacrifice. Mareech is thrown away several hundred miles away by Rama when he tries to disturb the sage. Subahu and other demons are also destroyed; and Vishwamitra completes his sacrifice.

The Vedic concept of offering food to the gods through

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[3] Ramcaritmanas, L.K., 11. 74d, 1-9.

sacrifices is emphatically referred to in the 'Ramcaritmanas'. In Bal-Kand Ravan says that the gods, in order to be made weak, must be deprived of their food, and therefore, all the sacrifices should be stopped:

> When Ravan, proud by birth, beheld his force
> With anger and pride he thus spoke
> O all the legions of demons! hark;
> Our enemies are all the gods;
> They do not fight face to face
> To behold a brave enemy they run away.
> The only way they may die,
> Listen now, the same I describe;
> Brahmin's feast, sacrifices and ceremonies
> You must go and cause to cease;
> Deprived of these the gods will starve and become weak,
> Thus hungry and weak easily they will come to meet,
> Then I may kill or let them go
> After having them fully in my control.[4]

Rama himself is stated to have performed millions of sacrifices in 'Ramcaritmanas' for the proclamation of his supremacy:

> The Lord performed millions of 'aswamedhas'.[5]

There is specific ~~and~~ reverential acknowledgement of personal

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[4] *Ramcaritmanas*, L.K., 11. 180d, 8-21.

[5] *Ibid.*, U.K. 1. 23d, 2.

Wrong ref

There are only 121d sequences in LK. Where do you get 180d.?

indebtedness of the poet to Vedas also:

> To the four Vedas I pay homage
> Ships they are to cross the sea of birth and death[6]

And again:

> O Garud! this is the philosophy of the Vedas
> Forget all works and worship Rama.[7]

Besides references to the sacrifices in 'Ramcaritmanas' there are too many indirect allusions to Vedic customs and recognition of deities. Indra and fire occupy important place and are considered to be the eminent deities of worship. Tulasi Das, in various contexts, has referred to Indra declaring him to be the king of gods. The sanctity and supremacy of fire is expressed in the following analogy:

> To those who are capable no vice is attached
> Like fire, sun, and the divine Ganges.[8]

Next to Vedas in chronological order are the Puranas. They are eighteen in number. Tulasi Das had studied all the Puranas and understood them. In fact Puranas have had much greater hold and influence on Hindu society in many ways

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[6] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11. 14d, etc.

[7] Ibid., U.K., 11. 122d, 2-3.

[8] Ibid., B.K., 11. 68d, 15-16.

than any other work. Tulasi Das is adequately indebted to Puranas in the formulation of his outlook. The references to Puranas in 'Ramcaritmanas' are brought in to glority the institutions of Hindu society. Although there is no direct mention of the stories and themes of the Puranas in 'Ramcaritmanas', there are occasions when Puranic thoughts and ideas are used not only to accord sanction of sanctity but also as means of being productive of desired results. One of the greatest virtues and weapons of Puranic system is the observance of penance. Another aspect of the Puranic doctrine is the multiplicity of god and the varying forms of rituals and worship. Tulasi Das has extensively dwelt upon these Puranic beliefs in 'Ramcaritmanas' on various occasions. The worship of Shiva, the marriage of Shiva with Parvati, and the acknowledgement of Brahmin's class superiority are Puranic concepts.

The quality of penance has been described as productive of great things in 'Ramcaritmanas'. Parvati is advised by Narad to perform severe penance in order to get Shiva as her husband. There could be no other easy way for her to marry Shiva. In this context Parvati describes her dream to her mother in which a Brahmin spoke to her:

Go and take to penance, O daughter of the Mountain,
What Narad has said take for granted.
This view your father and mother uphold,
Penance bestows joy and destroys sins and sorrows,
By power of penance Brahma creates universe,
By power of penance Vishnu is the savoir,
By power of penance Shesa holds the Earth,
O Bhawani! penance is the cause of Creation;
Go for penance having deemed thus.[9]

The potency of the virtue of penance has been repeated on other occasions also. The ascetic speaks to Pratapbhanu:

Let not your heart wonder O son!
Nothing is impossible for a man of penance;
By the power of penance Brahma made universe,
By the power of penance Vishnu became savoir,
By the power of penance Shiva is destroyer,
Nothing the world has, penance can not acquire.[10]

Penance is described in 'Ramcaritmanas' to have made the Brahmins very powerful:

Even death shall bow his head to you
But O Lord of men! never shall the Brahmins do.
Brahmins are supreme ever by penance[11]

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[9] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 72d, 1-10.

[10] Ibid., B.K., ll. 162d, 1-6.

[11] Ibid., B.K., ll. 164d, 2-4.

The demons of Lanka are also stated to have acquired their power by penance. In 'Ramcaritmanas' Ravan, Kumbhkaran and Vibhisan are shown as performing penance for achieving supremacy on the Earth. By their severe penance these three brothers are able to please Brahma, the giver of boons, and they get the desired results:

> The three brothers practised penance of various types
> Extremely severe which can not be described
> When Brahma beheld the penance he spoke to them
> O sons! ask for boon, pleased I am.[12]

The Puranic world had envisaged the concept of multiplicity of god. This belief is revealed in 'Ramcaritmanas' on many occasions. The whole poem seems to have been supported and given life by the animation of gods and goddesses. The characters of 'Ramcaritmanas' derive strength from the worship of gods and goddesses. Seeta worships Bhawani to get Rama as her husband:

> Janaki went to the temple of Bhawani again,
> Touched her feet and spoke with folded hands:
> Victory be yours! O daughter of the King of mountains!
> O partridge for the moon of Shiva's Countenance!
> O mother of Ganesh and Kartik! Victory be yours,
> Your body gleams like lightning, O mother of Universe!

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[12] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 176d, 1-4.

You have neither beginning, nor middle nor end
Your infinite might even Vedas don't understand
You create, preserve and destroy the world
. . . .
Thousands of Shesas and Sarad fail to express
The greatness of your boundless grace,
Your worship grants four supreme goals of life,
. . . .
O goddess! having worshipped your lotus feet
Gods, men, sages all derive bliss.[13]

Tulasī Dās himself derived the strength and inspiration from the worship of the gods to write 'Ramcaritmanas'. In the beginning of 'Ramcaritmanas' Tulasi Das composes hymns in praise of Saraswati, Ganesh, Parvati, Shiva and Hanuman. The Puranas had established a practice to begin any work, particularly of sacred nature, with the worship of gods; of whom Ganesh, Gouri and Shiva were given always the most honoured position. Tulasi Das while following that practice added to the list many more gods. He considered 'Ramcaritmanas' a holy work and began, therefore, with invocations:

I pay reverence to holy Ganesh and Saraswati,
The source of sounds, words, meanings and music
I pray to Parvati and Mahesh

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[13] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 234d, 7-24.

Who are the embodiment of devotion and faith,
Without whose grace even the adept cannot see,
Albeit the God in their hearts seated is,
I revere the holy guru in the form of Mahesh
Who is eternal and abounds in grace,
And everywhere being dependant on whom
Despite being curved is worshipped the crescent moon.[14]

Tulasi Das is not content by writing few lines only but continues to worship gods, sages, poets, philosophers and holy scriptures before he comes to the actual life of Rama:

O poets and philosophers! the beautiful swans
Of the holy lake of the acts of Ram
Be pleased and grant your grace
. . . .
To the lotus feet of that sage I bow
Ramayan who composed,
Which is delightful and sacred despite the demons
And is devoid of vices despite Dusan
. . . .
To the dust of Brahma's feet I pray
Who created the sea of birth and death
From where appeared. . . . .
I speak having bowed to the lotus feet of all:
O gods, Brahmins, scholars and stars!
May you all he pleased
To fulfil my holy wish.[15]

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[14] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 1-10.

[15] Ibid., B.K., ll. 14d etc.

This practice of Puranic prayers and hymns is found not only in the beginning of the Bal-Kand but also in the beginning of every canto of 'Ramcaritmanas'. The poetic talent of Tulasi Das seems to have profusely fed upon the thoughts of Puranas, and it seems that he would pour everywhere the essence of it to adorn the 'Ramcaritmanas'. The sanction of Puranas to the human behaviour in society for all purposes is considered to be of supreme importance in 'Ramcaritmanas'. The Puranic doctrine of righteousness is the scale on which the quality of human conduct is measured. Whatever conforms to it is holy and commendable, whatever does not conform is contemptible and profane. The reign of Rama is based on Puranic code of conduct. In Uttar-Kand after the return of Rama to Ayodhya the normalcy has been restored; and Rama wears the crown and is declared as the ruler of Ayodhya, Tulasi Das describes:

> Early in the morning having bathed in Sarjoo
> He sat in the court with the Brahmins and the noble
> On Vedas and Puranas Vashistha held discourse
> Rama listened, he already knew although.[16]

And again:

> In every house Puranas were read
> And the holy deeds of Rama were told in various ways.[17]

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[16] *Ramcaritmanas*, U.K., ll. 25d, 1-4.

[17] *Ibid.*, U.K., ll. 25d, 13-14.

Among the vices, Tulasi has described, one is the disrespect shown to Puranas by allowing Sudras to study it. The Sudras' conduct in doing so is questioned by Tulasi, for it will ruin the sanctity of Puranas. It is not that Tulasi Das held any notion of contempt toward 'Sudras', but according to the prevalent and prescribed norm of a caste-oriented Hindu society the reading of Puranas by 'Sudras', who formed a class by themselves for specific purposes, was considered to be a degradation of the whole society. The action was an act of sacrilege, for it would undermine integrity of Puranas according to Tulasi Das:

> Sudras perform prayer, penance and vows
> They sit on the dias and Puranas discourse.[18]

And again he speaks sarcastically:

> Those who revere not Vedas and Puranas in Kali
> Pass for true saints and devotees of Hari.[19]

Besides these direct references there are lavish borrowings of materials from Puranas. The stories of marriage of Shiva and Parvati, Brahmins cursing Pratapbhanu and Kagbhusundi and Garud dialogue are derived from Puranas.

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[18] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., ll. 99d, 17-18.

[19] Ibid., U.K., ll. 100d, 15-16.

They form the constituent units of the 'Ramcaritmanas'. Vedas and Puranas are generally given co-related honour in 'Ramcaritmanas'. Tulasi Das makes it clear in the beginning that the poem, he writes, is a composition of the ideas derived from the Puranas, Vedas, Ramayana and other sacred books.

The story of Raghunath Tulasi Das writes:

In sweet language for his soul's delight
Which in Ramayana was described
And from other sources also derived,
Which was sung by the Vedas
And praised by the Agmas and Puranas.[20]

To what source how much he is indebted is a difficult task to assess; but to Puranas he is indebted more than to any other holy book. Personally he does not discriminate between Vedas and Puranas because he deems the essence of both as the same. For historical reasons Puranas are given greater importance by the critics of Tulasi Das in respect of 'Ramacaritmanas'. One of the causes of the sacred position occupied in Hindu society by 'Ramcaritmanas' is its representation of the entire Puranic belief in a

[20] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., 11. (Sloka) 7-11.

simplified and acceptable form. 'Ramcaritmanas', being a social poem, served a useful purpose in bringing about a concept of unity, which was being destroyed by those who were trying to create a difference between the Vedic and the Puranic views. Tulasi Das has, therefore, invariably mentioned Vedas and Puranas together to indicate that both are the same essentially. What is implicit in Vedas is made explicit in Puranas. Puranas give form to what is formless in Vedas. The theory of incarnation emerged in the Puranas and Tulasi Das drew the concept of the absolute descending in human form from the Puranas. Obviously, his indebtedness to Puranas is very deep. It is because of conceptual affinity in matter and style that 'Ramcaritmanas' is considered as holy as Puranas by a section of people.

Tulasi Das never gets tired of quoting the Vedas and Purānas in 'Ramcaritmanas'.

> The Vedas and Puranas with joy he would listen
> And then to the younger brothers explain.[21]

> O infinite Lord! how shall I pray?
> The Vedas and Puranas describe thee measureless.[22]

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[21] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11. 204d, 11-12.

[22] Ibid., B.K., 11, 191d, 11-12.

O Lord! The Vedas and Puranas thus describe
In every heart thoughts good and bad lie.[23]

Vibhisan spoke in praise of ethics
Upheld by the learned, the Puranas and Srutis.[24]

The Vedas, Puranas, saints and sages all speak
Nothing is as hard as knowledge to achieve.[25]

These are not my personal thoughts
But the views of Saints, Puranas and vedas.[26]

John Milton has become a towering phenomena in English literature by writing Paradise Lost as Tulasi has become in Hindi literature by writing 'Ramcaritmanas'. Both of them are the product of many influences embodied in the tradition of their respective culture. There are two important ideas common to both the works: the idea of deviation from the allotted path resulting in degradation and fall, not only of man, but of human society as a whole also; and the pride of power causing arrogance which leads to disaster. These ideas had their genesis in the works of holy order. I have already traced the thoughts on the Puranic model which

[23] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., 11, 39d, 3-11.

[24] Ibid., S.K., 11. 40d, 1-2.

[25] Ibid., U.K. 11. 144d, 17-18.

[26] Ibid., U.K., 11. 116d, 1-12.

'Ramcaritmanas' contains. Tulasi Das has described sarcastically the vices of the Kaliyug in which the holy order is violated:

> There exist neither bonds of castes nor four orders of life
> Men and women oppose what Vedas prescribe,
> The Brahmins sell Vedas and Kings exploit subjects,
> The command of Vedas no one obeys,
> The ways of life are whatever one likes
> He, who chatters, is alone called wise.
> The people call him only saint,
> Who is showy and arrogant,
> He who robs others of their wealth,
> Passes for a man of intellect,
> He who is egoist and makes a fuss,
> Is known a man of good conduct.
> He who is funny and tells lies,
> In the age of Kali is an artist described.
> The deserter of Vedic paths and the characterless
> Are known in Kali as ascetics and learned.
> He who grows long nails,
> And keeps locks of hair on his head,
> In the age of Kali earns praise
> And is considered a renowned sage.
> . . . .
> O Lord! as a monkey dances as the acrobat wants
> So men are all under women's command.
> Shudras give Brahmins the discourse of wisdom
> They wear holy threads and receive unholy remuneration
> All men are given to lust, avarice and wrath;

They oppose saints, Vedas, Brahmins and gods.
The husbands of others the wretched women love
Their handsome and virtuous husbands having given up.
. . . .
The teachers have no eyes, and pupils no ears
The former see nothing, and the latter do not hear.[27]

The other idea of pride being the cause of disaster and defeat is revealed on many occasions in 'Ramcaritmanas', Narad, a sage of high order and a devotee of Vishnu, is humiliated by Vishnu himself. Having subdued Kama, the god of amorous love, he becomes proud in spite of the warning given by Shiva, Vishnu, the supreme deity, decides to quell his pride:

Narad told with pride in his mind,
O Lord! this is all by your grace for you are kind
The benevolent Lord deeply thought
A tall tree of pride has grown in his heart.
He said, 'forthwith I shall root it out,
To do the welfare of devotees is my vow.[28]

When Narad has faced the consequences of his pride, the Lord humbles him down by revealing to him the reality:

The force of illusion then
The gracious Lord withdrew at once;

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[27] *Ramcaritmanas*, U.K., ll. 17d etc.

[28] Ibid., B.K., ll. 128d, 5-10.

When the illusion was withdrawn by Hari
There remained neither the princess nor Lakshmi.
The sage was then with fear filled
And humbly fell at Hari's feet.[29]

Bāli is also killed for his pride. He pays no heed to the advice of his wife. Rāma tells him:

O fool! you are full of pride
You paid no heed to the advice of your wife.[30]

The main cause of the death of Ravan and his whole family is his pride. In spite of all the pleadings and persuasions of Mandodari, Ravan does not change his mind. Tulasi Das writes:

Mandodari then believed at heart
Fated to death, my husband's wisdom is lost.[31]

Being the victim of Rama's arrows Ravan falls, and Mandodari mourns his death:

O Lord! the earth trembled your might to behold
And before you, the fire, the sun, the moon lost their glow
The Tortoise and Shesa could endure not your weight,

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[29] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11 137d, 1-6.
[30] Ibid., K.K., 11. 8d, 17.18.
[31] Ibid., L.K., 11. 15d, 16-17.

The same body lies in the dust today,
Varun, Kuber, Indra and Air
To face you in battle field never could dare;
O Lord! you conquered death and Yama by your might,
The valour of sons and Kinsmen none could describe.
But this is your plight to Rama being hostile,
To mourn your death no one survives
. . . .[32]

There are many more incidents in 'Ramcaritmanas' revealing the resulting miseries of Pride vividly. But a few quoted above may serve our purpose here.

I I

Milton aspired for a great work to be written in such a way as to sum up the essence of the whole human existence for all purposes. It was fulfilled, but only after he had become blind, perhaps to compensate for the loss of his eye-sight. However, Milton's belief in the just ways of God remained unimpaired. There was only one doubt in the mind of Milton; and that was about the acceptability of his work by a large audience. He simply hoped that he might a fit audience find, though few for Paradise Lost. All great works meet the same destiny.

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[32] Ramcaritmanas, L.K., 11. 103d, 9-18.

Tulasi Das was also of the same view about 'Ramcaritmanas', and to appease the audience, he wrote a number of lines in the forms of prayers. Even the wicked have been worshipped by Tulasi Das in order that they may be pleased to refrain from creating obstructions. Milton differed with Tulasi on this point because he was, by nature, not a man to offer prayers to the wicked. He believed in open confrontation with them. He was not, therefore, deterred by what might follow such a work, in which his very soul was speaking. For a work of this kind Milton had created a trained talent in himself, partly by extensive study, and partly by meditation. The various sources to which he was indebted, and which contributed to his poetic genius in producing Paradise Lost, are of as many types as Tulasi Das had for writing 'Ramcaritmanas'. Milton studied many languages in order to have direct access to what was of great literary, religious and philosophical value in them. He read Dante, Petrarch, Plato and Greek and Latin classics. His training in the precepts of Christian religion bore special significance in his career. He travelled abroad and had meetings with distinguished men of learning in Europe. All these played important role in contributing to the knowledge and genius of Milton. In order to be relevant and brief, I shall

classify them in three categories only: the holy Bible and prophets; the Greek and Latin classics; and the philosophical works of Plato. The class of holy works corresponds to the Vedic and Puranic influences on Tulasi Das. I shall deal with the two categories of works only in my thesis.

The Biblican stories and the sermons of prophets had a very powerful influence on Milton. His early biography gives pictures of a quiet daily routine. Milton got up at 4 PM and had the Hebrew Bible read to him. Meditation, reading and dictation filled the time till midday dinner. Milton's late and long poems were of course, composed in his head, especially at night. Hebrew Bible had a special charm for Milton. Initially he was inclined to write dramas and he had selected about one hundred Biblical and historical subjects. Ultimately he chose the most momentous event, next to the life and death of Christ in the world's history. He outlined dramatic treatments of his theme in four short drafts which suggest Italian allegorical representation of biblical story. It is held that the following part of Satan's address to the Sun was written early as the opening speech of drama.

Then much revolving, thus in sigh began
O thou that with surpassing Glory crowned
Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God
Of this new world, at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminisht heads; to thee I call
But with no friendly voice and add thy name
O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere
Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down
Warring in Heav'n against Heav'ns matchless King.[33]

Later Milton shifted to the writing of epic, the reason being the supreme place that the form held in Renaissance theory. Moreover epic form could provide for the much needed larger scope also. Whatever was the reason for his wavering between the forms of drama and epic, his choice about the theme was decided once for all, and it was the story of Fall of Man. The story was not a new invention of the poet, but he was fascinated by it for his great purpose. For many centuries in the past, the fall of man had received copious theological commentary and innumerable imaginative treatments, narrative and dramatic. The simple tale in Genesis, and the more shadowy

[33] Paradise Lost, IV, ll. 31-41.

role of Satan in heaven, earth and hell had acquired a good deal of interpretative and concrete imbellishment. One late, long and popular example which Milton had known in boyhood is the crudely vigorous poem on the creation and the fall by the Hughenot Guillaume Du Bartas' which, translated by Josuah Sylvester as "The Divine Weeks and Works", held sway in England until superseded by Paradise Lost. His knowledge of theology being very extensive and of complex nature, it is hard to claim that a particular work is the only source of Paradise Lost. But the general fact is that the main motives and events of Paradise Lost had more or less precedent, though Milton handled them with powerful originality. Milton was reworking on a story familiar in outline to his audience. His story, moreover, was one of unique truth, sacredness and universal and eternal import, and it gave the poet the advantage of immemorial belief and association in the minds of his earlier reader, an advantage that no longer operates in the same way, although, for modern readers, the fable possesses the immemorial and universal import of archetypal myth.

It is here that we find that there is undeniable

similarity between Milton and Tulasi Das in executing their plan for writing their great epics. The story of Rama had a remote beginning and was used in several ways for literary, and religious purposes. In abstract form it was found in the Vedas also where there was a recognition of a Being of endless entity. 'Ramcaritmanas' is written on the same pattern as 'Paradise Lost', basing the inspiration and theme on the already prevalent ideas of Vedas and Puranas with a powerfully original handling of the poet himself. The holy water is the same but it flows in a different stream. This is as much true in case of 'Ramcaritmanas' as it is in case of 'Paradise Lost'. The re-working on an already prevalent and familiar theme gives them an advantage to be more popular and purposeful for the human society. They get an audience familiar with the theme and the risk of obscurity can not exist there. This is how the ancient tradition is handled by the two poets in their respective works. Tulasi Das was conscious of the magnitude and immensity of his project in 'Ramcaritmanas' and he found its sources in a mixed holy culture, and it is difficult to pin him down to any one sources, whatsoever. He says:

The story of Raghunath Tulasi Das writes
In a sweet language for his soul's delight,
Which in Rāmāyan was described
And from other sources also derived,
Which was sung by the Vedas
And also praised by Puranas and Agmas.[34]

So it is said about Milton's Paradise Lost also, though not by Milton himself:

When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold
In slender Book his vast design to unfold
Messiah Crown'd, Gods reconcil'd Decree,
Rebelling Angels, the forbidden Tree
Heav'n, Hell, Earth, Chaos, All; the Argument
Held me a while misdoubting his intent
That he would ruin (for I saw him strong)
The sacred Truths to Fable and old Song
Yet as I read, soon growing less severe,
I lik'd his project, the success did fear,
Through that wide Field how he his way should find
O're which lame faith leads understanding blind
. . . .
Pardon me, Mighty poet, nor despise
My causless, yet not inpious surmise
But now I am convinc'd, and none will dare
Within thy labour to pretend a share

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34 Rāmcaritmānas, B.K., Śloka 7.

Thou hast not missed one thought that could be fit
And all that was improper dost omit
So that no room is here for writers left
But to detect their ignorance or theft
That majesty which through thy work reigns
Draws the devout, detering the profane
And things divine thou threat'st of in such state
As them preserves, and thee inviolate.[35]

These lines in respect of Milton give identical views when compared to the self spoken lines of Tulasi Das in 'Ramcaritmanas':

Confidence I lack in the power of my gift
Hence to everyone I beseech
The life and deeds of Rama I desire to tell
But my talent is small and his deeds are boundless.[36]

My fortune is small but aspirations are lofty
I hold therefore this belief
That the noble shall hear it with delight
And the villains only may deride
. . . .
From the scoff of the wicked I benefit
The melody of a 'Koel' all crows call shrill
The crane laughs at swan and frog at cuckoo
So the wicked laugh at serene voice too.[37]

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[35] The Poetical Works of John Milton, ed. by Helel Darbishire O.U.P. New York, Toronto, 1958, p.2.

[36] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 7d, 7-10.

[37] Ibid., B.K., ll. 8d, etc.

No poetic merit my work doth possess
But the glory of Rama it manifests
The only faith in my heart I keep
Who receives not honour from noble fellowship?
. . . .
My poem is clumsy but a noble theme describes,
The story of Rama, a boon for mankind.[38]

On one side is the boundless glory of Rama
On the other side I am with worldly thoughts,
Speak, how before the wind cotton stand
At whose blow flies the Sameru mountain
The boundless glory of Rama when I deem
To narrate the story very nervous feel
Sarad, Shes, Shiva and Brahma
Agmas, Vedas and Puranas
Ceaselessly sing his glory and speak
'He is not this, He is not this'.[39]

Infinite profoundity of the theme of the works produces doubts and apprehensions about the receptivity of the audience in both the cases, despite the tremendous good the works are capable of delivering. This is how Milton And Tulasi Das hold the identical notion about their works.

Milton had drawn biblical theme for 'Paradise Lost' and this made his work profound to a very large extent.

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[38] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 9d, 1920

[39] Ibid., B.K., ll. 11d, 19-28.

For the treatment of his well-chosen subject he followed the doctrine of St. Augustine. It is necessary here to write a few words about St. Augustine in order to have a glance into the theological aspects of the work. In spite of all that can be said for and against, 'Paradise Lost' is related to the doctrine of St. Augustine in a substantial form. St. Augustine was born of a middle-class parents. His father was a Pagan and mother a pious Christian, a lady of intense but simple religious ideas. It is from her that Augustine learned a reverence for the name of Christ. At the age of 18 he was profoundly stirred by the reading of a treaties of Cicero with an enthusiasm for philosophy, which meant not only devotion to the pursuit of truth, but a conviction of the superiority of the life so devoted over any aims of secular ambition. The faith of Catholic Church, indeed, seemed to him too hopelessly bereft of philosophy to any man of culture to entertain; but he was easily carried away by the discovery in Manichaeism of a religion that professed to appeal to reason rather than authority. After sometime he was disillusioned by the Manichaeism. He developed his own view-points after he had entered the episcopate in Roman Africa. He was tireless in controversy with Manichaeism, Donatist and Pelagians. But the characteristic

pattern he imposed upon Christian theology was not the outcome of controversy. Augustine believed with Platonists that the God is the author of all existences, the illuminator of all truths, the bestower of all beatitude; and to it he added his own cosmology and ethics.

Donatists, despite their reluctance, agreed with the Catholics that the power of the Noly spirit is conveyed to the believer through the sacraments administered by the Church. The Donatists alleged that the sacraments required for their validity a ministry undefiled by moral sin. Augustine replied that the sacraments convey the spirit of virtue of Christ's ordinance alone, and that this validity can not be affected by the worthiness or unworthiness of the human minister. As the donatist controversy was gradually ending Pelagianism was already beginning to threaten doctrines of sin and redemption, traditional in the Western Church. Pelagins had set himself to resist the slackening of Christian moral standards. Against those who pleaded human frailty in exeuse for their failing, he insisted that God has made every man alike free to choose and perform the good; that it is the essence of sin to be a voluntary act which God's law forbids and which the sinner was free

to avoid; and that were not this freedom real, there could be no justice in God's punishments and rewards. Augustine found at once in Pelagianism a fatal misconception of the relationship between God and man. To assert that man can achieve righteousness by his own effort is to contradict the fundamental truth that God is the giver of all good. St. Augustine worked out his own rationalizations of the doctrines of Original sin and divine grace. He accepted the traditional belief in the transgression of Adam and in the penal consequences of it. He defined transgression as man's refusal to accept his place in the created order and the penal consequences as a dislocation of the order of man's own nature - the revolt of flesh against spirit. Augustine accepted the traditional belief that all men are involved both in Adam's fault and its punishment and argued that this involvement takes effect through the dependence of human generation on the sexual passion, in which the impotance of spirit to control flesh is most clearly seen. This was severely critized by the Pelagian Bishop Julian who asserted the moral neutrality of the instincts that belong to man's created nature. This is an impulse which man is bound to fight and conquer and cannot therefore be evil. But it is important to distinguish Augustine's profound understanding of the nature of human sinfulness

from his disastrous attempt to explain its propagation. The fall of man according to him means that in all of us the true order of love has been violated. Departing from the love of God above us we have followed the love of self and become subject to what is below us. Man has fallen by the act of his own will. He cannot, by similar exercise of will, reverse the consequences of that fall. The subjection of spirit to flesh is a slavery from which the perverted will has no power to deliver itself, just because it cannot will the deliverance. What is needed is a kind of reversal of gravity - the substitution of an uplifting for a down - dragging love. It was Augustine's belief that this could happen only by that gracious descent of the divine love to dwell within the sinner which is the Gospel of Incarnation.

Pelagius claimed to recognise the grace of God in creation and revelation. All men have been created free to do what is right when they see it, and Christians have received the needed morals in Christ's teaching and example. Augustine knew the unreality of Pelagian conception of freedom as an innate and absolute power of choice, unaffected by circumstances. He pointed to the inescapable conditioning of all moral activity by the situation of the agent -

outside whose control are in general not only the presentation of an object but also the kind of feeling that the presentation excites. The act of will is dependent on feeling as well as on cognition. According to Augustine men will not do what is right, either because the right is hidden from them or because they find no delight in it, but that what was hidden may become clear, what delighted not may become sweet: this belongs to the grace of God. St. Augustine held that no event in time can alter the eternal setting of God's will toward any human soul: his elect alone receive the grace that will win their acceptance. He dealt with this doctrine thoroughly and on an appalling scale in 'De Curtate Dei' (The City of God). The Fall story of Milton in Paradise Lost may be correctly understood in relation to this doctrine of Augustine. Professor C.S. Lewis has dealt with this aspect of Paradise Lost in his 'Preface' to the book and I consider it necessary to dwell upon it here for supporting the view point of this thesis.[40]

The first argument in this connection given by C.S. Lewis is about the nature of things created by God. All things were created good by God and He made no exception

[40] C.S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost, O.U.P., London, 1975, pp.66-69.

at all. Milton's god says:

> I made him just and right
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall
> Such I created all th' Ethereal powers
> And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed.[41]

Together with the native goodness of character the human beings created by God are given the faculty of reason and the free will to either exercise that faculty or to wisely obey the injunction of God. The angel says:

> O Adam, one Almightie is, from whom
> All things proceed, and up to him return
> If not deprav'd from good, created all
> Such to perfection....[42]

The possibility of deviation from the ordained path is very strong in Paradise Lost. It is as powerful as in 'Ramcaritmanas'. Ravan and his clan being left to appropriate their faculties in right direction would remain unfallen and undestroyed. But the pride of power makes them unable to foresee the consequences and they deviate from the right path to the audacity of rising against their Creator. The doctrine of power by its nature, if not carefully controlled, pollutes the ability for free thinking

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[41] P.L., III, ll., 98-101.

[42] P.L., V, ll. 469-72.

with disastrous results. This is what we find in Paradise Lost also. It is through pride that all good things are perverted. Pride is the daughter of power and a resulting sin. This perversion arises when a conscious creature becomes more interested in itself than in God and wishes to exist on its own. This is the sin of Pride. The first creature who ever committed it was Satan, the proud angel who turned from God to himself, not wishing to be a subject, but to rejoice like a tyrant in having subjects of his own. The prime concern of Milton's Satan is with his own dignity; he revolted because he found his position humbled:

> but not so wak'd
> 'Satan', so call him now, his former name
> Is heard no more in Heav'n, he of the first
> If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power
> In favour and prominence, yet fraught
> With envy against the son of God, that day
> Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
> Messiah King anointed could not beare
> Through pride that sight and thought himself impair'd.[43]

He endeavours to maintain that he exists on his own in the sense of not having been created by God:

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[43]P.L., V, ll. 657-665.

That we were formed then saist thou? and the work
Of secondarie hands, by task transferred
From father to his son? strange point and new.
Doctrine which we would know whence learnt; who saw
When this creation was? rememberest thou
Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now
Know none before us self-begot, self-rais'd
By our own quickening power.[44]

Satan is a "great Sultan" and "monarch" a blend of oriental despot and Machiavellian prince.

From the doctrine of good and evil it follows that good can exist without evil as in Milton's Heaven and Paradise, but not evil without good. That good and bad angels have the same nature, happy when it adheres to God and miserable when it adheres to itself. The existence of good and bad as enemical forces has been described in 'Ramcaritmanas' in the following lines:

O Lord! Vedas and Puranas thus describe
In Every heart thoughts, good and bad lie,
But prosperity dwells there where mind is high
Where mind is malicious only miseries multiply.[45]

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[44] P.L., V. 11. 852-60.

[45] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., 11. 39d, 9-12.

The nature of Satan had some parts of excellence but through the perversion of his will it becomes obscure. This is what Milton wants to say. If no good at all remained to be perverted Satan would cease to exist.

he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a Tower; his form had yet not lost,
All her original brightness; nor appeared
Less than Arch-Angel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured.[46]

St. Augustine remarks that though God has made all creatures good He foreknows that some will voluntarily make themselves bad and also foreknows the good use which He will then make of their badness. For as He shows His benevolence in creating good natures, He shows His justice in exploiting evil wills. Milton follows the same doctrine in his poem. God beholds the attempt of Satan to pervert man and says:

And Man here plac't, with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy, or worse
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert
For man will heark'n to his glozing eyes
And easily transgress the sole command.[47]

He knows that sin and death "impute folly" to him for

[46]P.L., I, ll. 589-94.

[47]P.L., III, ll. 90-94.

allowing them so easily to enter the universe but sin and death do not know that God called and drew them thither, His hell hounds to lick up the draff and filth:

> See with what heat these Dogs of Hell advance
> To waste havoc younder world, which I
> So fair and good created, and had still
> Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
> Let in these wasteful (furies) who impute
> Folly to me, so doth the Prince of Hell
> And his Adherents, that with so much ease
> I suffer them to enter and possess
> A place so heavily, and cunning seem
> To gratify my Enemies
> That laugh, as if transported with some fit
> Of passion, I to them had quitted all
> At random yielded up to their misrule
> And know not that I called and drew them thither
> My Hell hound to lick up the draff and filth
> Which man polluting sin with taint hath shed.[48]

It was the ignorance of the sin to mistake this Divine calling for sympathic and some co-natural force, between herself and Satan:

> Whatever draws me on
> Or sympathic, or some co-natural force
> Powerful at greatest distance to unite
> With secret amity things of like kinde
> By secretest conveyance.[49]

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[48] P.L. X, ll. 616-631.

[49] P.L. I, ll. 246-249.

In Book I when Satan lifts his head from the burning lake by high permission of all ruling Heaven the same idea is repeated:

> but that the will
> And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
> Left him at large to his own dark designs
> That with reiterated crimes he might
> Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
> Evil to others.[50]

The angels point out that whoever tries to rebel against God produces the result opposite to his intention -

> Who seekes
> To less'n thee, against his purpose serves
> To manifest the more thy might

At the end of the poem Adam is astonished at the power

> That all this good of evil shall produce
> and evil turn to good

This is the exact reverse of the programme Satan had envisaged in Book-I, when he hoped, if God attempted any good through him, to 'pervert that end', instead he is allowed to do all the evil he wants and finds that he has produced good.

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[50] P.L. I, 11, 246-250

Augustine holds that women are less intelligent and more credulous. That was the reason why Satan attacked Eve rather than Adam. So Milton's Satan says:

> Then let me not let pass
> Occasion which now smiles: behold alone
> The woman, opportune to all attempts
> Her Husband, for I view far round, not nigh
> Whose higher intellectual more I shun.[51]

The other points in the character of Adam and Eve which Milton has drawn from Augustine is the obligation to the social bond between them. Adam was not deceived. He did not believe what his wife said to him to be true. His surrender was not on account of Eve's better knowledge but being fondly overcome by female charm. Adam says:

> How can I live without thee, how forgoe
> Thy secret converse and Love so dearly joined
> To live again in these wilde woods forlorn?[52]

The concepts of fall, being the results of deviation from the commanded path, and pride being the cause of such deviation have already been mentioned. This is as much true in case of Satan as in case of Adam and Eve.

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[51] P.L. IX, ll. 479-83.

[52] P.L. IX, ll. 908-10.

Disobedience is deviation from the command of the God. Apple was a visible reality to keep Adam and Eve ever mindful of the command. It would be productive of no harm and being left to remain uneaten the quality of obedience would also remain unimpaired. The idea that God created all things good applies to the apple also. In Eve's dream apple has a holy significance:-

> O fruit Divine
> Sweet of thy self, but much more sweet thus cropt
> Forbidd'n here, it seems, as only fit
> For Gods, yet able to make Gods of Men.[53]

Good characters in Milton speak of apple as the 'sole pledge of obedience', 'the sign of obedience' and the subject of a single and just command. But Satan, a bad character, assumes that knowledge is magically contained in the apple and will pass to the eater whether those who have forbidden the eating wish or no. Pride plays the destructive role. First the pride of beauty, and then the pride of knowledge to be acquired from the eating of apple impair the virtue of holy bond with the apple. Eve felt admired by the appreciation of her beauty. This is the beginning of pride.

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[53] P.L. V, ll. 67-70.

Wonder not, sovereign Mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who are sole Wonder, much less arm
Thy looks, the Heav'n of mildness, with disdain
Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feard
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir'd
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker faire
Thee all things living gaze on, all things
By gift, and thy Celestial Beautie adore.[54]

Satan proceeded to arouse suspicion in Eve about the God's intention:

doe not beliefe
Those rigid threats of Death; y'e shall not die!
How should ye? by the fruit? it gives you life
To knowledge!
. . . .
To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil,
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunn'd
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just
. . . .
Why then was this forbid?[55]

I have discussed here in detail how Milton depended on St. Augustine. Professor C.S. Lewis has given ample proof of this dependence of Milton on Augustine. There are scholars

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[54]P.L. IX, ll. 532-40.

[55]P.L. XI, ll. 685-773.

who do not agree with Lewis but from the lines quoted above, and the arguments offered, it becomes clear that the core of entire Miltonic doctrine of the fall is in conformity with the views expressed by Professor Lewis. The great moral which reigns in Milton is the most universal and most useful that can be imagined, that obedience to the will of God makes men happy and that disobedience to the will of God makes them miserable. Disobedience causes fall through pride, the pride of self-possession.

Paradise Lost has received many interpretations in respect of Milton's theology, but the most significant feature of it is his dynamic creed of Christian liberty, a reformation doctrine, which he deepened and widened beyond its common limits. Milton argued that 'it is not lawful for any power on earth to compel in matters of religion:

> So many Laws argue so many sins
> Among them; how can God with such reside?
> To whom thus Michael! Doubt not but that sin
> Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
> And therefore was Law given them to evince
> Their natural pravities, by stirring up

Sin against law to fight, that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove,
Save by those shadowie expiations weak
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for man
Just for unjust, that in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed, they may find
Justification towards God, and peace
Of conscience, which the law of ceremonies
Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
Perform, and not performing can not live,
So law appears imperfect, and but giv'n
With purpose to resign them in full time
Upto a better Cov'nant, disciplined
From shadowie types of truth, from flesh to spirit
From imposition of strict laws, to free
Acceptance of large Grace, from servile fear
To filial, works of law to works of faith.[56]

Milton has written elaborately about his ideas on scriptures which helped him in his great work. His 'De Doctrina Christina' is a very large treatise which held a central place in his thoughts and labours. Here is contained much acute argument and it spells out with clear precision the ideology that operates in Paradise Lost. Most of Milton's essential beliefs are those of traditional Christianity but always on

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[56] P.L. XII, ll 283-306.

authority he finds in the Bible. He departs from orthodoxy on some notable point. God created the world, not out of nothing but out of his own substance. God, the Father, the Son and the Ghost, are not co-equal trinity, but a descending order. Man's soul dies with his body, until revived at the resurrection. The significance of the first point is that, in Paradise Lost Milton expounds a monistic and optimistic metaphysics, a sort of Christian materialism:

> Inhabitant with God, now know I well
> Thy favour, in this honour done to Man
> Under whose lowly roof thou hast voutsaf't
> To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste
> Food not of Angels, yet accepted so
> As that willingly thou could not seem
> At Heav'ns high feasts to have fed; yet what compare?
> To whom the wing'd Hierarch replied -
> O Adam, one Almightie is, from whom
> All things proceed, and up to him return
> If not deprav'd from good, created all
> Such to perfection, one first matter all
> Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
> But more refin'd, more spiritous and pure
> As nearer to him plac't ....[57]

Since the one first matter of God's own substance is good,

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[57] P.L., V, ll. 461-676.

since all creation proceeds from God and, if not depraved from good, returns to him, matter is not essentially different from spirit but is forever in the process of becoming spirit.

In Chapter II pp. 25-61 of 'De Doctrina' Milton gives expositions to his doctrine of God. God is incomprehensible, but the statements about Him in the scriptures should be taken quite literally.

> "Our safest way is to inform our minds such a conception of God as shall correspond with His own delineation and representation of Himself in the sacred writings........ If it repented Jehovah that He made man. .... let us believe that it did repent Him, only taking care to remember that .... repentance when applied to God does not arise from inadvertency as in men; for so He Himself has cautioned us. God is not a man that He should repent."

Milton thus attempts to combine the theological transcendence with the literal acceptance of the scriptures.

The mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the Almighty God as incarnated in the form of Rama in 'Ramcaritmanas' of Tulasi Das is very nearly comparable to what Milton speaks of his God or the God of Christianity. In

Ayodhya-Kand Tulasi speaks:

The beginning and end of whom none can comprehend
The Vedas by their knowledge like this sang.
He walks without legs and hears without ears,
Without hands he does deeds many and various,
He has no tongue but relishes all the tastes,
He has no voice but most ably orates,
He touches without body and sees without eyes,
Without nose he inhales fragrance of all kinds,
Unworldly are his deeds in all the ways,
His greatness can not be expressed.
He who is described thus by the Vedas and the wise
And on whom the sages concentrate their minds
Is Rama, the son of Dasrath, and the God
The benefactor of devotees, Ayodhya's Lord.[58]

I have quoted profusely from the texts of 'Ramcaritmanas' and Paradise Lost to examine the influence of the ancient scriptures both on Tulasi Das and on Milton in their respective areas. The influence of Vedas and Puranas on Tulasi Das, and of Bible and St. Augustine on Milton have been of immense value in formulating their views about the theological aspect of their works. They viewed the whole framework of their planned work with their eyes on an eternal God, while relating Him to the social and human behaviour.

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[58] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11, 117d, 7-20.

Ramcaritmanas and Paradise Lost are baptised in the sacred precincts of holy thoughts that have given light of wisdom to mankind in all the ages. The relevance of these holy works has become a changeless reality and Milton and Tulasi have therefore survived through centuries. They have become the parts of unforgettable antiquity.

CHAPTER-III

IV

TRANSFORMATION OF LITERARY TRADITION IN PARADISE LOST AND RAMCARITMANAS

In the preceding chapter, I have discussed how the ancient scriptures provided foundation for the works of Tulasi Das and John Milton. They were respected more for their holy character than for aesthetic and literary values. In this chapter, I propose to dwell mainly on the literary works of various types, to which these poets are indebted. Tulasi Das has emphatically admitted on a number of occasions how he has derived both materials and inspiration from the ancient literature for writing 'Ramcaritmanas'. Tulasi Das studied the lives and works of the great poets and sages who had written and spoken on the same theme before he began to write 'Ramcaritmanas'. He writes:

> Valmiki, Narad and Augustya have described
> In their own words how they got their lives.[1]

The influence of Valmiki 'Ramayana' is so obvious in 'Ramcaritmanas' that often the work is mistaken to be an imitation of the former. To what extent 'Ramayana' of Valmiki

[1] Rāmcaritmānas, B.K., 11. 2d, 5-6.

has really influenced Tulasi Das shall be discussed later in this chapter. Narad and Augustya are also mentioned in various contexts in the 'Ramcaritmanas'. Unlike Valmiki, they are saints only who have produced no work like "Ramayana". But Tulasi Das adores them, for they are the saints of high order. In the following lines Tulasi Das pays homage to Saints:

> Without meeting saints wisdom is not attained
> And without the Will of Rama none finds saints.
> Of all blessings and bliss the fellowship of saints is root
> All other means are flowers and that only is the fruit.
> . . . .
> The tongues of Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, poets and the wise
> The glory of saints hesitate to describe.[2]

Tulasi Das thinks that saints occupy higher position than poets. But if a saint is poet too, he is considered unique. Two such saints, who were poets too, are Valmiki and Vyasa. Though they have dwindled into legends now, Tulasi Das considers them to possess a real entity. He proclaims his indebtedness to them:

> The acts of Hari the sages sang in the past
> O brother! it is easy for me to follow their path.

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[2] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., II. 2d, 13-22.

When on boundless river a King builds bridge
Even tiny ants cross over it with ease;
Having thus inspired myself
The pleasant story of Raghupati I shall tell.
Vyasa, Valmiki and other great poets who ever lived
And described with reverence the glory of Hari
May bless me all my aspirations to achieve
For I pray to their lotus feet.
Further I pray to the poets of Kali
Who have sung the profound virtues of Raghupati,
The Prakrit poets of highest gifts
Who praised in language the acts of Hari,
The poets who have been and shall be
I pray being free from all conceits.
Be you all pleased and bless me so
That the saints may honour the poem I compose.[3]

And again:

O poets and philosophers! the lovely swans
Of the holy acts of the lake of Ram
Be pleased and grant your grace
. . . .
To the lotus feet of the sage I bow
Ramayan who composed
Which is holy and delightful despite the demons,
And is devoid of vices despite Dusan.[4]

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[3] _Ramcaritmanas_, B.K., ll. 12d, 19-36.

[4] _Ibid._, B.K., ll. 14d, 1-8.

I believe the lines quoted above from 'Ramcaritmanas' will make it clear that Tulasi Das admitted his debt to many saints and poets, and probably, more than due to them. That is in keeping with the traditional humility of saints, because Tulasi Das was a saint also. Towards the end of the book he has very modestly said that the materials he borrowed were used by him according to his own understanding.

> O Lord! I have described, now in detail and now brief,
> As I understand the unique deed of Hari.[5]

How far he has used his own understanding and to what purposes shall be the subject of later discussion.

As regards John Milton, it can be said that he had not known Valmiki and Vyasa, and certainly had not studied Ramayana and Mahabharata. But he travelled to other countries for his materials and inspiration. He found that there were two great epic poets - Homer and Virgil - who had written in Greek and Latin respectively before. Milton's education had equipped him with the knowledge of Greek and Latin, and he, therefore, acquired the thorough grasp of the ideas and styles of the two poets by a personal study of

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[5] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 122d, 1-2.

the original works. Milton deemed it essential not to ignore any of them, but to utilize them in building his own solemnly chosen edifice in the Paradise Lost. Homer was senior to Virgil and the latter, therefore, owed a good deal to the former. His indebtedness was not to consist in mere copying either the form or the content of Homer's work, but intended to create a separate, and entirely different, entity for himself by way of presenting a contrastive approach, while utilizing the characters and incidents of the same story. Milton's task was made easier and at the same time more difficult. He would run the risk of being called an imitator if he followed either Homer or Virgil. At the same time he could not deny the ground prepared by them for his stand. His critical and repeated study of Homer and Virgil rescued him from the risk. It is by familiarity with them that Milton could visualize where lay the scope for creating his own image as a great poet while conforming to the 'doctrinal' theme of Paradise Lost. Despite personally being indebted to Homer, as Virgil also was, for guidance as to the manner in which a long story might be told in verse without monotony, Milton accepted 'Aeneid' as the great neo-classical model before him. He was said to have known Homeric poems by heart and

often echoed them, but in the treatment of his subject he did not follow his honoured Greek predecessor for a variety of reasons, as Virgil had done. 'Paradise Lost' has some inner as well as surface affinities with 'Aeneid'. As Virgil, with his partly abstract theme, re-created what he imitated from the concrete Homer, so Milton, with his far more abstract theme - the assertion of Eternal Province, the justification of God's way to man - recreated what he borrowed from both. The invocations of the Muse, which in Milton mark new stages in the story, become addresses to the heavenly muse, Urania, and prayers for the aid of the creative spirit of God. As artist he links himself, both proudly and humbly, with the ancients, especially Homer and the blind bards of Greek myth, but he regularly ranks his Christian theme above the themes of the pagan poets. As he had said long before, in explaining why he must postpone his epic, it was a work not 'to be obtained by the invocation of the Dame Memory and her seven daughters, but by devout prayers to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and send out his seraphin, with the hallowed fire of altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.'

Some other large features of the classical and

especially Virgilian pattern may be mentioned here in brief. Milton makes daring use of the prescribed plunge 'in medias res' since he gives the magnificient first two books to his 'villain'. Virgil has a roll call of the Italian chiefs who gather to oppose the heaven-sent Aeneas; Milton's roll call of the leaders of the fallen angels, in making them individuals, also becomes the survey of the spread of heathen idolatory over the eastern world. The realistic power of the debate in hell dwarfs all other epic councils. Epic accounts of Hades and of all funeral games are combined, in Milton's pictures of Hell, with Christian lore, but the lurid and dismal scenes and the physical and mental diversions of the fallen angels symbolize their spiritual death and futile striving. The ward of gods and titans and giants supply details of the war in heaven, which is a large metaphor for the anarchy of sin. The story of events that preceded the opening of the poem, which Odysseus recapitulated at the court of Alcinous and Aeneas at the court of Dido, becomes the archangel Raphael's account of Satan's revolt and war and the Son's creation of the world; and the great object lesson for Adam is underlined by a discourse on astronomical uncertainties which contrasts humble righteousness with the prideful quest of external knowledge. Finally,

while a prophetic picture of human history might figure in stories of the fall, Michael's revelation of Adam (Book XI - XII) recalls Anchise's revelation to Aeneas; but whereas Aeneas learns of the divinely destined Roman 'imperium', Adam is shown supernal grace contending with the sinfulness of man and the eventual triumph of love with the advent of man's Redeemer - though he is shown too how the gospel of salvation becomes corrupted. The prime example of this kind, though it goes far beyond classical parallel and contrast, is the characterization of Satan, who is one of the supreme figures in world literature. Satan has, on a super-human scale, the strength and courage and capacity for leadership that belong to the ancient epic hero, but these qualities are all perverted in being devoted to evil and self-aggrandisement.

Professor C.S. Lewis has classified the epic poetry into two classes - the primary epics and the secondary epics. This classification is based on chronology and not on the quality of epic poetry. He places the works of Homer - Iliad and Odyssey, and the 'Beowulf' in the first category and Virgil and Milton in the second category. The primary epics are the beginning of epic poetry. The works of Virgil and Milton - 'Aenied' and 'Paradise Lost' - are junior

in time but superior in quality. This classification may partly be applicable to the epic poetry of India also - 'Ramayana' of Valmiki being the primary epic and Adhyatma Ramayan and 'Ramcaritmanas' being the secondary epics. The poems of Homer were in essence those of "barrock-room ballads", a camp quarrel over a woman or a veteran's home-coming and the everyday events without any intrinsic quality of sublimity or grandeur. The sublimity and grandeur are lacking in his style also. Beowulf is a poem of crude adventure accompanied by external adornments in the Halls with feasts and music. But to Virgil the epic has to be 'sublime', a great poem on a great theme. To Milton it becomes sacred also. He adds solemnity to it by introducing a subject-matter into it, that is not only great but also doctrinal to a nation. I shall deal with it in detail later in this chapter.

I

To resume the discussion on Tulasi Das I refer to the classification of 'Ramayana' as primary epic and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' and 'Ramcaritmanas' as secondary epics. The Ramayana was written earlier than the latter two epics. But here

also, as in case of Homer and Virgil, being first in time does not attach a meaning of superiority in terms of quality. The classification is merely analytical to facilitate the study and pronounces only a historical sense. Scholars have admitted that Vyasa had read 'Ramayana' before writing his 'Adhyatma Ramayana' and that Tulasi Das had read both 'Ramayana' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' before he wrote 'Ramcaritmanas' needs no opinion to be accepted. As Virgil and Milton derived as well as differed from earlier predecessors so did Vyasa and Tulasi Das also. To deal with Vyasa's indebtedness to Valmiki may seem out of the purview of my discussion. Hence, I shall examine only how Tulasi Das has done so. Valmiki's 'Ramayana' is considered as "Adikavya", i.e., the beginning of poetry, and is written in Sanskrit. There is no evidence of any earlier work in the form of epic. That it is an "Adikavya" is written in the 'Ramayana' itself in the chapter dealing with the battles:[6]

Transliteration

आदि काव्यमिदं चार्षं पुरा वाल्मीकिना कृतम् ।

There is a vague reference in the 'Mahabharata' to another

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[6]Gopinath Tiwari: Tulasi Purva Sanskrit Ram-Sahitya Tulasi Das, Vichar Aur Vivechan, Milan Mandir, Calcutta, 1974, p.37.

ślokaścāyam purāgīto Bhārgavena mahātmanā,
ākhyātam Ramacarito nrpati pratibhārata.

work on the theme of "Ramayana":[7] 101864.

Should have transliterated

श्लोकश्चायं पुरागीतो भार्गवेन महात्मना ।
आख्यातं रामचरित नृपति प्रतिभारत ॥

But Bhargava, as referred to, is a mysterious person and the work assigned to him is not traceable in any form. Some scholars believe that Bhargava is a name given to Valmiki. Aswaghosa says that 'the work which high sage Chyawan had failed to do was done by Valmiki.' This is not in agreement with what has been said earlier that 'the work which was composed by Bhargava on Rama's acts is knowable to us'. Mahabharat in its Swargarohan Parva (Chapter 6, Sloka 93) confirms the views that 'Ramayana' of Valmiki was an earlier composition. In Vanparva of Mahabharat there are seven hundred and four verses describing the story of Rama based on Valmiki's 'Ramayana'. There are three opinions about the composition of 'Ramayana' of Valmiki which must be mentioned here. (1) Valmiki had composed 'Ramayana' before Rama was born. (2) Valmiki was the contemporary of Rama and he had learnt the whole story of Rama from Narad to be able to write 'Ramayana'. First Valmiki had written a poem in which Seeta was elevated

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[7] Gopinath Tiwari: Tulasi Purva Sanskrit Ram-Sahitya Tulasi Das, Vichar Aur Vivechan, Milon Mandir, Calcutta, 1974, p.37.

above Rama. This was done to celebrate the greatness of Seeta in facing the miseries of life. Later, after Rama and Seeta were united Valmiki reversed the theme and gave Rama the highest position in the poem and named it as 'Ramayana'. (3) The third opinion holds the composition of Ramayana much later than the age of Rama. After Rama had ruled and passed away there grew many legends to glorify his reign. Valmiki collected all these to compose 'Ramayana'. This view believes that this was done by another Valmiki who is different from the Valmiki of Rama's age. The main question here is how Valmiki got the stories of 'Ramayana' and how those stories have been received and used in the 'Ramcaritmanas'.

The only answer, leaving aside the opinions that have no authenticity, is that the story of Rama was prevalent much before 'Ramayana' was written and in various forms served the purpose of social entertainment. In Vedic literature 'Akhyanas', 'Itihasa' and 'Puranas' have been designated as the fifth Veda. In ancient time in the court of the kings the ministerials used to narrate these stories and sing them having composed in verses. The origin of Ramayanic literature is dated back to the reign of Ichhwaku

dynasty. Rama is the descendant of this dynasty. Hence it is held that in the courts of the kings of Ichhwaku dynasty the stories of Rama were composed and narrated to provide entertainment to the people. There are legends to make the attempt of dating more difficult. Brahma is said to have asked Valmiki to compose 'Ramayana' but the materials for the poem was provided by Narad. Once Valmiki spoke of Narad, 'who is at present virtuous, brave, righteous noble, learned, benevolent and almighty on the earth?[6] Narad described at length then the story of Rama from the beginning to the end. The same was composed by Valmiki in verses. The second part of the question, how Tulasi Das received and used it in his 'Ramcaritmanas' will be answered in detail in the proceeding lines. Here it may suffice to say that Tulasi Das believes in the mysterious origin of the stories of Rama. His views about Rama makes the whole problem of ascertaining the beginning a transcendental issue. He says:

> He is Rama, the Sum of Bliss
> Birthless, Omniscent, Omnipotent and Beautiful
> Omnipresent, all Himself, Invisible, Infinite
> The God whose might is infallible
> Attributeless, Mighty, transcending sounds and senses
> All pervading Invincible and faultless.[7]

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[6] Ramayana, B.K. 1.1-3.

[7] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., ll. 71d, 5-10.

He considers the story of Rama of dateless origin which has neither beginning nor end. Shiva, Narad, Kagbhushindi, Valmiki, Vyasa, Yajyavalk and Tulasi Das are merely a few of many who described the story of Rama. This is what Tulasi Das holds all through the epic. But that the Ramcaritmanas is based on the profuse borrowings, and Valmiki Ramayana is the first of them, is admitted by Tulasi Das also.

The alterations, omissions, and additions which Tulasi Das makes in 'Ramcaritmanas' in the borrowed materials in order to make it his original work is an interesting study. I shall refer to only few of them to illustrate my point. In 'Ramayana' only after a short introduction Valmiki begins the story with a description of Ayodhya and her king Dasrath with his ministers and the king's desire for a son. Obviously, there seems to be nothing spectacular about the birth of a much desired son. In 'Ramcaritmanas' this is treated with a marvellous difference. Instead of coming directly to the point of Dasrath's eagerness for a son Tulasi Das strives to create an atmosphere of sanctity at the very outset by offering prayers and invocations to the various gods and goddesses, saints, poets, philosophers and all the creatures

of the universe, benevolent or beneful. He believes that the beginning of a great work must be celebrated by pleasing and propitiating the forces, human or divine, malignant or benign, including animate and inanimate, for they are all capable according to their nature. He bows to them having considered them the manifestation of 'Rama and Seeta'. Then he describes how Shiva and Parvati were married, how Narad was trapped into illusion, how Pratapbhanu was deceived and then how Ravana and his kiths and kins were born. He describes the reign of anarchy and unrighteousness on earth resulting in the persecution of holy Brahmins, cows, gods and earth. The description runs to several pages. In order to bestow emphasis on the aspects of holiness of the work Tulasi Das repeats the invocations to some of the gods and goddesses. The desire of Dasrath for a son is preconditioned by the necessity of the birth of Rama to revive righteousness on earth, which has become extinct on account of the domination of demons. 'Ramcaritmanas' has a glorious beginning and the essence of the whole poem is understood by the reader before he has reached the point of birth of Rama. Tulasi Das holds the readers in awe and reverence, and keeps them waiting for something great that is going to happen.

In 'Ramayana' there are many stories told by Valmiki which find no place in 'Ramcaritmanas' or find only oblique mention. Most of these stories narrated in 'Ramayana' seem to be out of context and are obviously intended either to fill the gap or to serve informative purpose. The literary texture is lacking and their relevance to the main theme of the epic becomes questionable. This is not allowed in 'Ramcaritmanas' to happen. Tulasi Das does not forget even for a moment that his epic aims at glorifying the dominance of Rama only in all the episodes. Both in 'Ramayana' and in 'Ramcaritmanas' Rama is led by Viswamitra to Janakpur. But in the case of former the journey provides an occasion for story-telling whereas in the later the poet makes a passing reference only to those stories. Valmiki describes the story of Sagar and his sons, the efforts of Bhagirath to bring down the Ganges to the earth and the churning of sea by the gods and demons. The battle between the gods and demons is described in detail in Valmiki for the possession of nectar. These are interesting events, but according to an advanced aesthetic taste they appear irrelevant occurrences causing monotony in the epic. Tulasi Das makes only allusive reference to those legends with presumption of fore-knowledge on the part of the readers. About the

bringing down of Ganges to the earth Tulasi Das speaks only this:

> Rama and Lakshman proceeded with the sage
> And reached the world-purifying Ganges
> The son of Gadhi narrated the tale
> How to the earth descended the Ganges.[8]

But the incident of Ahilya being revived by a touch of Rama's feet is emphatically treated by Tulasi Das. This is because the first incident celebrates the glory of Bhagirath whereas the second describes the marvels of the dust of Rama's feet. Ahilya was turned into a rock by the curse of her husband. The reasons and manners of the event are not described in 'Ramcaritmanas' presuming a fore-knowledge on the part of readers. Moreover, Rama is not involved in the events of the curse. His part happens in releasing Ahilya from the curse only. The act of Rama in restoring Ahilya to life by the touch of his feet is of valued importance for Tulasi Das because it reveals the greatness of Rama. The poet composes hymns in praise of Rama to be offered by Ahilya as a mark of gratitude. Rama's complete silence at what has happened and how he is praised is remarkably expressive of his greatness. Valmiki does

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[8] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11. 221d, 1-4.

not provide any such occasion of elevated importance in 'Ramayana'. He plainly tells how Ahilya was cursed, and merely how she was purged. A line of reference to the gratitude of Ahilya seems to be enough in 'Ramayana'. But for Tulasi Das it is a great event and he lays all his devotional emphasis on it. He says:

> The sage described the episode in detail.[9]

But the poet himself drops the details and hangs on devotion:

> The wife of Gautam had been cursed
> She is lying patiently into stone being turn'd
> Bestow upon her your grace O Raghubir!
> For she needs the dust of your lotus feet.[11]
>
> At the touch of sacred feet which dispels all grief
> That image of penance herself revealed.
> To behold Rama, the delight of devotees
> She stood up with folded hands in front of him
> Overwhelm'd with devotion her body was thrill'd
> And she was unable a word to speak,
> The blessed woman clasped his feet
> And tears like stream rolled down from her cheeks
> Then calm she became and watched the Lord
> And by his grace devotion got.
> With sacred words sincerely she prayed:
> Glory to Rama who is known by knowledge.
> I am a woman unholy by birth
> You are the holy Lord the universe to purge.

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[9] _Ramcaritmanas_, B.K., ll. 209d, 24.

[10] _Ibid._, B.K., ll. 210d, etc.

The enemy of Ravan you are
And for your devotees a giver of joy,
O lotus - eyed Lord! the worldly fear you dispel
I seek your shelter, be pleased to save.
Rightly I was cursed by the sage
I consider it to be his grace
A full sight of Hari now I view
Who redeems the distress of the world.
This is considered by Mahesh
The highest good for one to get.
O Lord! I am ignorant and I pray only this
Without asking for any other bliss,
May my mind be devoted to your feet
And feed upon its honey like bees.
The feet from where flows the Ganges
Which Shiva takes on his head as sacred
The lotus feet which Brahma worships, O Hari!
To put on my head you are pleased.
Thus again and again Ahilya clasped the feet of Hari.
And received that which she eagerly wished
To her husband's realm she went with bliss
The Lord is kind without reason the poor he helps
Hence Tulasi Das says:
O fool! give up the deceitful world and pray.[11]

These lines reveal that Tulasi expresses his own feelings of devotion vicariously through Ahilya. This is completely wanting in Ramayana of Valmiki. Valmiki's approach is factual whereas Tulasi Das makes it an occasion of abundant

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[11] *Ramcaritmanas*, B.K., 11. 211d, etc.

overflow of powerful devotional feelings.

The meeting of Vishwamitra with Janak and his introduction of Rama and Lakshman to Janak is less spectacular in Valmiki. In 'Ramcaritmanas' it is not a mere occurrence. The scene provides for amazement on the part of Janak and an impression of a pre-determined event is gathered from this happening. This becomes more obvious when Rama and Seeta behold each other in the royal orchard, as if in restrained confrontation aspiring for a union. Tulasi Das draws Rama and Seeta nearer before the bow contest and they appear psychologically so deeply won by each other that the bow contest seems unnecessary for the marriage. But Tulasi Das artistically, and in a highly dramatic style, maintains the usefulness of the bow-contest, not so much for the marriage of Seeta as for the display of Rama's valour and might-Rama speaks to Lakshman:

> O brother! she is the daughter of Videh
> For whom the bow contest is held,
> The maidens have brought her for the worship of Gouri
> And she roams in the garden scattering gleam,
> Though chaste by nature my mind is disturbed
> Her celestial beauty to observe.[12]

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[12] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 230d, 1-8.

The reason for this only Brahma knows
But O brother! my graceful limbs throb, behold.

How does Seeta react to it is described in the following lines:

Seeta watched all around being bewildered
Where the princes had vanished she wondered.
With her fawn-like eyes where ever she viewed
White lotus rained in multitude.
Then the maiden showed behind the creepers
Those handsome youths dark and fair,
The eyes became greedy to hold their forms
Having discovered treasure they were charm'd,
The eyes rejoiced Rama's grace to see
And their twinkling ceased,
The body became indolent with deep love
As a partridge she looked at the moon of Autumn,
She took Rama at heart through her eyes,
And closed her eyes being wise.[13]

From literary and aesthetic points of view the bow of love is broken before the contest. The bow-contest after this becomes a mere show to stage obstructions and fears. The breaking of the physical bow is kept in suspense for exposing the other kings and warriors to ridicule and thereby to celebrate the greatness of Rama.

[13] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 231d, 1-14.

In Valmiki 'Ramayana' also there is a bow contest but the art and skill of its organisation is not so purposeful and dramatic as in 'Ramcaritmanas'. A brief survey of the bow contest in both the works will explain the difference. In Ramayana a declaration has been made by Janak to the world that Janaki will be married to one who is able to break the heavy and tough bow of Shiva. The kings and warriors visit at their convenience and try their strength. They come and go but none except those with Janak see them. It has continued for some time, perhaps for months and years. The bow is not kept at any public place but on a wheeler in the palace. When Rama and Lakshman have visited the place Janak asks several thousand warriers to carry the bow to the place and Rama is asked to break it. The bow is ultimately broken by Rama without any dramatic expositions. Here it seems that the bow can be lifted by enormous manpower, because several thousand warriors have somehow been able to carry it. But in Tulasi Das the bow is treated on basis of as-is-where and not even ten thousand kings and warriors are able to move it. This shows that Tulasi Das does not compromise the integrity of the bow by any degree of human power. Here Rama goes to the bow and not that the bow is brought to him. The bow is lying

on the place since it was ever kept there. The kings and warriors of unsurpassing valour have assembled. A crowd of men and women to witness the contest makes the occasion romantic. Some have fears and some have hopes. Even Janaki with her mother and friends is there with wistful eyes to behold the contest. The kings and warriors try one after another, but fail to move the bow. Even thousands of them together try with no better success. This leads Janak to exasperation and he bursts into contemptuous remarks against the suitors. The situation becomes tense and Janaki and her mother and friends are plunged into grief. Then Rama stands up and in an unassuming style casts a glance at the bow first and then at Janaki. He breaks the bow considering it as a trifle obstruction in his love for Janaki. This causes unprecedented amazement in the crowd. This is followed by hymns and allegations resulting in a turmoil. The fruitless vauntings of the frustrated suitors add glory to the act of Rama. These are not found in Valmiki. The visit of Parasuram on the spur of the moment administers a temporary shock on the admirers of Rama. The vanquished kings, though yet present on the scene, derive an essenceless delight from the rebukes of Parasuram. The tension which was subsiding is revived for a while. The dialogue between

Parasuram and Lakshman and later between Parasuram and Rama is of great dramatic importance in the epic. In 'Ramayana' Parasuram meets Rama while the latter is on his way back to Ayodhya after marrying Janaki. In 'Ram-caritmanas' the scene is created by the poet to arouse devotion for Rama by bringing him in contact with the rivals. His supremacy becomes more dominant in the midst of hostile circumstances. He looks mighty not simply because he has broken the bow but because in his presence the other kings stand totally disgraced and the obstacles vanish without a touch of resistance. His valour casts a gloom on his enemies. The boastings of the lost suitors seem to drown as empty sounds in the admiring emotions of the audience for Rama. Even Parasuram, who creates terrors for others, is vanquished at the end and not only acknowledges defeat but offers hymns of praise to Rama also. All these episodes are wisely and skilfully presented to serve a useful purpose. In 'Ramayana' most of these events are either not found or occur as a matter of course without adding any solemnity and grandeur to the occasion. Tulasi Das borrowed the idea of a bow contest perhaps from Valmiki but the execution of it he borrowed from a similar story in Mahabharat where a huge gathering has assembled for a

bow-contest in connection with the marriage of Draupadi, and Arjuna as the disguised suitor performs the feat of honour to the utter amazement of the spectators.[14]

There is another episode which is found in both the poets but is treated differently. In 'Aranyakand' of the epics there is a story of golden deer being killed by Rama. It is crafty deer and allures the mind of Seeta by his deceptive colour. Rama runs after it being asked by Seeta for the lovely skin of the deer. The deer is a demon in disguise. Rama is taken far away and when the deer is killed he reveals his real form and cries out for help. This voice is heard by Seeta and brings apprehensions to her mind. Believing Rama in trouble she asks Lakshman to run for Rama's help. This event has been dealt with differently in both the epics. In 'Ramayana' Lakshman expresses his reluctance to leave Janaki alone. This happens in "Ramcaritmanas" also. Seeta is terribly annoyed in both the poems. But in Ramayana she speaks filthy words and administers undeserved rebukes suspecting the conduct of Lakshman. In 'Ramayana' (chapter 45 of Aranyakanda) there are forty verses which

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[14] Mahabharat; Adiparva, (ed.) Gita Press Gurakhpur Samvat 2030, pp. 537-543.

narrate the feelings of Seeta towards Lakshman. Valmiki brings her down to the level of an ordinary woman unworthy of any respect. In Tulasi Das this is not allowed to happen. He casts only a passing glance at this event and in order that the stature of Seeta as the wife of Rama may not be impaired sums up the whole situation in an admiring way:

> There the helpless cries when Seeta heard
> To Lakshman in terror thus she uttered:
> Run at once, in peril is your brother,
> Lakshman smiled and said; Listen O mother!
> At a frown of his brow the creation shall perish
> Can he, even in dream, be in peril?
> When Seeta spoke rude words,
> Hari impelled and Lakshman was disturb'd.
> He entrusted Seeta with the gods of air and wood
> And went where for the moon of Ravan was Rahu.[15]

Both Seeta and Lakshman are in the same situations in 'Ramcaritmanas' as in 'Ramayana' but their words display restrained thoughts. Their conduct is more disciplined and their character is not allowed to fall from the elevated position.

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[15] Ramcaritmanas, Ar. K., ll. 27d, 3-12.

Valmiki, apparently unaware of the sacred role they are supposed to play in relation to Rama, makes Seeta indulge in vociferous arguments. To Valmiki the distinction between Seeta and an ordinary woman is not of any material significance, He lets loose the feelings of a frightened wife through Seeta regardless of her esteemed position as the wife of Rama.

There are many other incidents to which Valmiki attaches great importance but Tulasi Das considers them of little significance. The killing of Kabandha and felling of seven palm trees in a circle by one shot of his arrow by Rama are dismissed by Tulasi Das in a line or two only but are described in detail by Valmiki. On certain occasions the scene in 'Ramayana' seems to stoop low to the erotic and vulgar points. In 'Ramcaritmanas' such occasions are carefully avoided without any damaging effect on the integrity of the poem as a piece of literature. One of such occasions occurs in Sundar Kand when Hanuman has entered into the palace of Ravana at night in search of Seeta. Valmiki describes in detail the amorous scene of Ravana's harem.[16] There are thousands of women, unsurpassingly

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[16] Ramayana, S.K., Chap. IX.

beautiful, to entertain Ravana. The poet seeks to arouse amorous passion by a detailed description of their beauty. In 'Ramcaritmanas' the poet is completely silent on such aspects of Ravana's palace. In spite of the fact that it is night and Hanuman beholds the same scene the poet does not show any inclination to indulge in such descriptions, To do so might appear unnatural. While frantically searching for Seeta if the poet allows Hanuman to watch and observe the naked beauty of the women, it may appear deviation from the main purpose. The treatment of Valmiki here is incompatible with the sacred theme of the poem. It falls short of moral significance which Tulasi Das attaches to his poem. Hanuman has entered secretly the palace of Ravana with a purpose. His dedication to the main purpose of his mission does not permit him to while away his time in any other thing. To present Hanuman with a serious and risky job to be performed in an alien land of dangerous demons can not appropriately fit in with the kind of scene described in 'Ramayana'. Hence Tulasi Das does not describe in detail and the whole scene is carefully touched upon in merely few lines:

From palace to palace he searched for:

And countless warriors everywhere he saw
Then he entered the palace of Ravana
Unique it was which excelled description.
The monkey beheld him fast asleep
But Vaidehi in the palace he could not see.[17]

There may be another reason why Tulasi Das does not treat Hanuman observing the beauty of women of Ravana's palace. The conduct of Hanuman, a celebate by birth, appears contradictory to his character in the framework of Valmiki. That is not allowed to happen in the scheme of Tulasi Das. To him the image of Hanuman as a devotee is of as much valued importance as the image of Rama as the Lord. The poet in the Ramcaritmanas is not only wise but careful also. He fashions his characters keeping in view the whole purpose of his poem and no temptation of any kind, erotic or chivalric, deviates him from the basic path.

The meeting of Hanuman with Seeta and the dialogue between them is found in 'Ramayana' as well as in Ramcaritmanas. But in 'Ramayana' there are descriptions which are considered unnecessary in 'Ramcaritmanas'. Hanuman introduces himself to Seeta by narrating a series of events that had occurred in the life of Rama. He puts several questions

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[17] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., ll. 4d, 9-14.

to Seeta also to ensure that she is the wife of Rama.[18] In Chapter XXXVII Hanuman proposes that Seeta may accompany him to Rama. He asks her repeatedly to sit on his back and he will then carry her unobstructed to Rama. Seeta argues and says,

> "O high monkey! I know your valour, for you are the son of wind. A common monkey can not land into the territory of Ravan having crossed the vast sea. But it is not proper for me to sit on your back. I may fall down and faint. If I fall into the sea the creatures of the sea will devour me up. Moreover you will be then in the company of a woman and the demons will suspect you .... There is another reason, O high monkey! for not accepting your proposal by me. I do not like to touch the body of any male person willingly except Rama."

Thus there are points of arguments in 'Ramayana' both for and against the proposal. In 'Ramcaritmanas' the whole episode is narrated in brief yet worthy and honourable style. Hanuman says:

> O Mother! I can take you back now at once
> But I swear by Ram, the Lord did not command.
> O mother! have patience for a few days only
> Rama shall come accompanied by monkeys.[19]

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[18] Ramayana, S.K. Chap. 31-36.

[19] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., 11. 15d, 5-8.

Seeta doubts the assurance and says:

> O son! all the monkeys are only like you
> But the demons are valiant and huge
> Hence with serious doubts my heart is filled.[20]

And then:

> The monkey heard it and his stature revealed
> . . . .
> Then in Seeta's heart confidence grew
> And the son of wind a tiny form took.
> Then Hanuman said: O mother! listen
> Monkeys have not much valour and intelligence
> But when the Lord grants his grace
> Garud can be devoured by a tiny snake.[21]

This humility of Hanuman expressed in his conversation with Seeta is missing in 'Ramayana'. This is the admirable privilege of Tulasi Das only. On his return to Rama also Hanuman expresses his humility in a similar style, Rama asks:

> O monkey? tell me how could you burn
> The mighty fort under the care of Ravan?

Again Tulasi Das says:

> Hanuman found the Lord well-disposed
> Devoid of pride these words he spoke:

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[20]<u>Ramcaritmanas</u>, S.K., ll. 15d, 11-13.

[21]<u>Ibid.</u>, S.K., ll. 14d, etc.

A beast of trees only this pride holds
From one branch to another he can go.
I cross'd the sea and the golden city burnt
The groves I ruin'd and killed the demons
O Lord! that was all by your might.
There is nothing for me to take pride.[22]

Tulasi Das does not expose Seeta to any vulgar situation. In 'Ramcaritmanas' there is an incident of the crow hitting the feet of Seeta which does not find any mention in 'Ramayana'. This is to show respect to Seeta only.

The stupid son of Indra under the guise of a crow
The Power of Rama wanted to behold
. . . .
That crow hit Seeta's feet with his beak
And flew at once away, ignorant and stupid.[23]

In whatever position Seeta is placed, her honour remains well-protected in 'Ramcaritmanas'. In Rāmayana, the poet is not very careful. He treats her as a mere character in the poem. There are over a hundred of points of difference between the two works. These have been dealt with in scholarly manners by some other scholars. Here I wish to draw

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[22]Ramcaritmanas, S.K., 32d, 9 etc.

[23]Ibid., Ar. K., 11. 2d, 9 etc.

the circle of my reference to a few of them only for illustrative purpose.

The story of 'Uttarkand' in 'Ramayana' is totally different from that of 'Ramcaritmanas'. The former contains many things which have no place in 'Ramcaritmanas'. The one seems to be a document of historical events in the life of Rama, the other lays vigorous emphasis on the unearthly and mysterious entity of Rama. Instead of describing what Rama does and what happens to him at the end of his life Tulasi Das touches upon the miraculous restoration of Ayodhya to a new life of prosperity, religious and communal harmony and dedication to duty. He then describes the mysterious origin of the story of Rama. The end of 'Ramcaritmanas' is turned into a highly philosophical discourse. The story of Kagbhushindi and Garud has no place in Valmiki 'Ramayana' whereas in 'Ramcaritmanas' it is dealt with in detail with pious serenity and seriousness. As a whole Ramcaritmanas casts no aspersion on the revered characters. The deeds of Rama, unique in all respects, receive elevated significance on the earth. Tulasi Das presumes the fore-knowledge of many events and scriptures on the part of the readers. This enables him to avoid unnecessary loading of his work with details. The situations,

dramatic or descriptive, are created and handled with eyes always centred on the divine personality of his hero. Nothing that is derogatory in the life of either Rama or Hanuman or any of his admired and adored personages is given place. This is in brief how Tulasi Das differs. He acts like a refinery converting the crudes collected from Valmiki into refined products. The episodes of 'Ramayana' are altered and alluded and occasionally omitted completely to make his work more relevant to his personal purpose, moral, solemn, philosophical and poetically beautiful. His purpose is moral because it refers to human ethics, is philosophical because it refers to philosophy of devotion and is poetically beautiful because it refers to tranquility of aesthetic emotions. In 'Ramcaritmanas' Tulasi Das establishes in a grand poetical way a link between the divine revelation and the performance of earthly duties and thereby elevates the values of social duties. In fact, the distinguishing feature of 'Ramcaritmanas' is the importance given to the inter-action of love of God and social duty.

'Adhyatma Ramayana' is the second great work from which Tulasi Das derived the materials of 'Ramcaritmanas'. The authorship of 'Adhyatma Ramayana' is obscure but the work has largely been attributed to the writer of Mahabharat

who is popularly known as Vyasa. It will be useful to write a few words on the form and contents of the 'Adhyatma Ramayana' in order to understand the extent of indebtedness of Tulasi Das to it. It has many similarities with and differences from Valmiki 'Ramayana'. The poem retains the fundamental framework of the 'Ramayana' but it has been considerably reduced in size to almost a fraction of it. All that is not relevant to the transcendental entity of Rama is left out. There are several portions added to the story taken from Valmiki. These are mainly the hymns and philosophical discourses. The hymns glorify the supremacy of God and the philosophical discourses reveal the nature of God, man and the universe. Rama is the unfailing Lord of his devotees. Further, many changes have also been made in the story of the 'Ramayana'. The significant change that appears in the 'Adhyatma Ramayana' is the substitution of the real Seeta by a mere shadow. The other noteworthy difference is found in the treatment of Rama. In Valmiki he acts like a natural human being with nothing to amaze or bewilder us. In 'Adhyatma Ramayana' Rama is a man in form only but his acts and behaviour are all supernatural. His deeds and words are miraculous and he reveals only divinity all around himself. Whenever his conduct manifests

a natural human behaviour the poet creates a belief among the readers that Rama is merely acting. The story is narrated by Shiva instead of Valmiki. Shiva, with his consort Parvati, occupies a sacred position in the 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. There is an attempt in the 'Adhyatma Ramayana' to manifest the divine in earthly form. In Valmiki there is an attempt to make the earthly being strive for attaining divinity through perfection of action. There exists no pre-conceived notion of divinity about a man. In 'Adhyatma Ramayana' it does exist. The notion continues to hang around even when Rama does not act like the divine. Rama is described as:

Should have transliterated.

रामः परात्मा पुरुषः पुराणो
नित्योदितो नित्यसुखो निरीहः ।
तथापि मायागुण सङ्गतोऽसौ
सुखीव दुःखीव विभाव्यतेऽबुधैः ॥

(Trans: Rama is the Absolute Being
The soul of Puranas, the Eternal Light
The Eternal Bliss, Inalienable
But to ignorant men he looks as if
By sorrows and joys of Illusion affected he is.[24]

Thus in 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the hero is a transcendental being. In Valmiki, Rama is always on the earth.

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[24] Adhyatma Ramayana, Yuddha Kand, Chap. I, Sloka 54.

In Tulasi Das we find closer affinity with 'Adhyatma Ramayana' which he considers more useful for his poem. 'Ramcaritmanas' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' are identical in many respects and obviously Tulasi Das is more indebted to 'Adhyatma Ramayana' than to any other work not excluding Valmiki Ramayana. I have described earlier how Tulasi Das made omissions, additions and alterations in the story of Rama. Similarly in preceding paragraph we have noticed how in 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the same kind of omissions, additions and alterations have been made while retaining the framework of 'Ramayana'. It is therefore clear that Tulasi Das made the scrutiny of 'Ramayana' after 'Adhyatma Ramayana' had already processed it. Touched by two hands the story of Rama gets a much improved and solemn reception in the framework of Tulasi Das. The long story of Valmiki was considerably reduced by 'Adhyatma Ramayana' in size. Tulasi Das felt that the story should be neither too long nor too short. He therefore enlarged the theme of 'Adhyatma Ramayana' and abridged the voluminous version of Valmiki. Thus 'Ramcaritmanas', as we find it now, is unique in size and it occupies a compromising position between the two great works. In 'Ramcaritmanas' the first chapter, Balkand, is the longest next followed by Ayodhyakand, the second chapter.

In 'Ramayana' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the sixth chapter is the longest. It deals with the battles. The second chapter of 'Ramayana', 'Adhyatma Ramayana' and the 'Ram-caritmanas' are proportionately of equal size, more or less. The Arnyakand, Kishkindhakand and Sundarkand have been diminished to one third of Ayodhyakanad in size. In Valmiki Ramayana and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' they are not reduced to that extent and are kept at a size to equate about half of the Ayodhya kand in respective poems. Uttar kand is the third longest chapter in 'Ramcaritmanas' which corresponds to Valmiki Ramayana but differs from the 'Adhyatma Ramayana'.

The one thing that is strikingly different, and is found neither in Valmiki nor in 'Adhyatma Ramayana' is the prologue of 'Ramcaritmanas' in the form of hymns and prayers. 'Adhyatma Ramayana' strives for adding a touch of unearthly solemnity to the contents of the story by converting the story into a dialogue between Shiva and Parvati. Tulasi Das following the same style has surpassed the 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. He converts the dialogue into something unique by way of corollary. He involves the four stages of it in the story - the first dialogue between Shiva and Parvati,

the second between Kaghushindi and Garud, the third between Yajyavalka and Bharadwaj and the fourth between himself and the readers. The beginning of 'Ramcaritmanas' is entirely original contribution of Tulasi Das to the epic and the hymns have been composed to reveal his devotion for Rama. He acknowledges the inadequacies of his resources to express the greatness of his Lord and seeks apologies for writing in the language of common man. He exalts the 'name' of Rama and considers it above everything, not excluding Rama himself. He declares that his poem is a holy lake for it deals with the acts of Rama. All this he writes to foretell the sanctity to be attached to the work. None of the works of the other two poets contains such beginning. Further the stories dealing with the causes of incarnations of Rama are not found in 'Ramayana' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. These are the stories of Narad, Manu and Satrupa, Bhanu, Pratap and the birth of Ravana and demons. They are borrowed from Puraaas and are purposefully inserted into the general framework of 'Ramcaritmanas' to glorify the incarnation of Rama. Rama and Seeta have seen each other before the bow-contest in Tulasi Das but as I have said earlier this is not found in 'Ramayana' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. In 'Ramcaritmanas' Tulasi Das introduces a visit of Janak to Rama in the forest which

finds no mention in the earlier works. Apart from Atri's hymns[25] and the opening salutations and the closing exhortations which are always distinctive of Tulasi Das in the third chapter of 'Ramcaritmanas' is the introduction of an episode showing the sage Narad paying an unexpected visit to Rama which is not mentioned in the other two works of his predecessors, namely the 'Ramayana' and the 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. The meeting of Hanuman and Vibhisan on the former's visit to Lanka is not found in the earlier "Ramayana". The first meeting of Hanuman and Vibhisan takes place in 'Ramcaritmanas' before Hanuman's first confrontation with Ravan. This is new. In Lankakand there are many instances of fresh additions made by Tulasi Das. Mandodari tries three times to persuade Ravan by her requests, fears and warnings to surrender to Rama. Hanuman while on his way back to Rama with the life-giving herb is shot down by Bharat who mistakes him for a demon. Rama saves Vibhisan from being hit by the spear of Ravan by standing himself in front of him. These incidents find no place in either 'Ramayana' or 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. The acknowledgement of the omnipotence and over-all supremacy of Rama by Mandodari, the wife of Ravan, in her dialogue with her husband is an admirable contribution of Tulasi Das

[25] _Ramcaritmanas_, Ar. K., 11. 3s, 1-24.

to the story of his poem. This makes the situation significantly devotional. It provides an occasion, on the other hand, to display the pride of Ravan also before his total disaster takes place.

Scholars there are who believe that 'Ramcaritmanas' is the 'Ramayana' rewritten by Tulasi Das filling it with the substance derived from 'Adhyatma Ramayana' and clearing out the portions not relevant to the philosophy of devotion. Since I have described how much he has not derived from 'Adhyatma Ramayana' it will be useful to write briefly how much he has derived from it. He follows 'Adhyatma Ramayana' in Balkand where he writes several verses closely similar to passages in 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. The revelation of divine stature by Rama to Kauslya and her devotional hymns, Brahma's hymn to Shiva, Ahilya's hymn to Rama are akin to the spirit of 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. Later in Ayodhyakand of 'Adhyatma Ramayana' there is a lengthy and philosophical discourse by Lakshman on the nature of God, man and universe to Guha while Rama is resting; there is a short hymn of praise of Bharadwaj to Rama and by Valmiki an extensive hymn of praise to Rama. Tulasi Das follows the 'Adhyatma Ramayana' in all these matters, either directly or indirectly. The

philosophical discourse of Vashistha to Bharat and the conversation between Rama and the boatman are in the same process of borrowing of Tulasi Das. To sum up, it may be said that he borrows the body from 'Ramayana' and life from 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. The beauty and charm that make 'Ramcaritmanas' unique is his own original contribution.

It will be straining too far to prolong the discussion on the two works only in determining the value of 'Ramcaritmanas'. There are other works also whose influences obviously can not be denied. All that is not taken from either of the two works and also not created by himself is believed to have been taken from Puranas and Mahabharata. There is a direct evidence of borrowing from Mahabharata. Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna the reasons of his being incarnated.[26] In 'Ramcaritmanas' Tulasi Das translates almost literally the same ideas:

> When righteousness begins to diminish
> And the demons, the villain and the proud increase
> Lawlessness they create which excels all words
> They torture the Brahmins, cows, gods and earth
> Various forms then the merciful Lord assumes
> And the agonies of the saints removes.
> He kills the demons and restores god
> Protects the integrity and honour of Vedas.[27]

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[26] Shrimad Bhagavat Gita, Chap. 4, Sloka 7.

[27] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11. 120d, 11-18.

The story of Rama's life was available in Mahabharata also but Tulasi Das had enough of other resources already for 'Ramcaritmanas' and therefore he borrowed only few things from Mahabharat, the important of them being of philosophical nature. The central idea of Mahabharat is to expose the proud and the wicked to disastrous failures. No victory can be achieved at the cost of reason, righteousness, truth and honesty. In 'Ramcaritmanas' these ideas are working in the life of Ravana, who pays no heed to these qualities. Thus Tulasi Das makes use of the morals of Mahabharat in fashioning his characters.

Tulasi Das takes materials from Bhagwat Purana also. This is done to achieve deeper solemnity. The sacrifice sponsored by Daksha to which all the gods excluding Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva are invited is taken from Bhagwat Purana. The style of childish pranks of Rama are derived from the same source where such pranks are beautifully described in respect of Krishna. The miraculous manifestation of Rama's supremely divine form before Kaushlya is a replica of Krishna's self-manifestation of divinity at his birth to his mother. The description of the city of Janak bears close resemblance to the city of Mathura in Bhagwat Purana. The bow contest provides a scene in 'Ramcaritmanas' where

Rama is seen by each of the men and women assembled there according to personal attitudes. This is what we find in the Bhagwat Puran also where Krishna is the central figure of similar attraction:

मल्लानामशनि नृणां नरवर:
स्त्रीणां स्मरो मूर्तिमान
गोपानां स्वजनोऽसतां क्षिति भुजां
शास्ता स्वपित्रो: शिशु:।

मृत्यु भोजपते विराड विदुषां
तत्वं परं योगिनां
वृष्णीनां परदेव तेति विदितो
रंङ्ग गत: साग्रज: ॥

"When Lord Shri Krishna accompanied by Balram presented himself in the arena he appeared as mighty warriors with a body of thunderbolt to the wrestlers; as a jewel of mankind to the common men, as 'Kama' personified to the women, as kinsmen to the cow-boys, as administrator of justice to the cruel kings, as a lovely child to the old men and women, as death itself to Kansa, ... as the absolute to the wise sages and as the adored God to the people of Brishni race."[28]

This is what echoes all through the lines in 'Ramcaritmanas' given below:

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[28] Bhagavat Purana, Section X, Chap. 3, Slokas 16-17.

Everyone beheld the image of the Lord
According to the feelings of one's heart
The warriors saw in Rama's form
Valour itself having been transformed.
The demons who were there in the guise of princes
Beheld in the Lord an image of Death.
The residents of the city beheld both the brothers
As the monarchs of men, for eyes a pleasure.
With glee at heart the women watch'd
According to the feelings of their heart.
The felt that the concept of beauty itself
With unique form was present.
The Lord appear'd as the Absolute to the sages,
With many hands, legs, eyes and heads.
The Kinsmen of Janak looked at him
He was closely related as if.
. . . .
To the ascetics he seemed Absolute supreme.[29]

Another example of the total identification of views appears in the Lankakand of 'Ramcaritmanas' in the verses attributed to Mandodari when she strives to persuade her husband to give up enmity with Rama:

Believe me for what I say
The Absolute he is, in the form of gem of Raghu race,
The Vedas personify the existence of
The spheres of the universe in his every part

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[29] _Ramcaritmanas_, B.K., ll. 200d, 7-20.

The netherworld is his feet and the Heaven his head
The other sphres in his other limbs dwell
The frown of his brow creates terrible time
The clouds are his hairs and the sun dwells in his eyes.
Ten directions make his ears, the Vedas say
The Vedas are his words and air his breath
His lips are avarice and teeth Lethe (Yamraj)
Illusion is his laugh and arms are Dikkpal.
His face is fire and tongue firmament
His acts are Creation, Preservation and End.
Countless herbs of kinds of eighteen are his pores
Rivers are the network of his veins and mountains his bones.
Shiva is his ego and Brahma his genius,
The moon is his mind and the Absolute his wisdom.[30]

Let us compare the ideas in Bhagwat Puran when Shiva addresses to Krishna after the latter's victory over Bana:

Transliteration

त्वं हि ब्रह्म परं ज्योतिर्गूढं ब्रह्मणि वाङ्मये।
यं पश्यन्त्यमलात्मान आकाशमिव केवलम्॥
नाभिर्नभोऽग्निर्मुखमम्बु रेतो
द्यौः शीर्षमाशाः श्रुतिरङ्घ्रिरुर्वी।
चन्द्रो मनो यस्य दृगर्क आत्मा
अहं समुद्रो जठरं भुजेन्द्रः॥
रोमाणि यस्यौषधयोऽम्बुवाहाः
केशा विरिञ्चो धिषणा विसर्गः।
प्रजापतिर्हृदयं यस्य धर्मः
स वै भवान् पुरुषो लोककल्पः॥

[30] Ramcaritmanas, L.K., 11. 14d, 1-14.

> "O Lord! thou art the supreme Absolute in the form of Eternal Light purposefully hidden in the Vedas. The righteous sages behold thy Omnipresent and serene form with its vastness of the sky. The firmament is the navel, the fire is thy mouth and water thy semen. The Heaven is thy head, the directions are thy ears and the earth is thy feet. The moon is thy mind, the sun thy eyes and I, Shiva, thy pride. The sea is thy belly and Indra thy arms, the herbs are thy pores, the clouds are thy hairs and Brahma is thy wisdom etc."[31]

The works of Kali Das and some other authors have also been occasionally usefully utilised by Tulasi Das. They have helped Tulasi Das in style and poetic skill. But to deal with the topic in further details will be a deviation from the main subject of the thesis. The purpose of the illustrative references to the works on the life of Rama prior to Tulasi Das is merely to show that Tulasi Das had plenty of materials before him to rework on the same theme. He strove for making use of all of them to restricted extent only depending on the degree of their relevance. I may conclude by saying that Tulasi Das procures the raw materials from all available sources and when these materials are processed through the refinery of his imagination they are turned into a miraculously different product resulting in the creation of a totally separate and original entity for Tulasi Das.

[31] Bhagwat Puran - Section X, Chap. 63, Sloka - 34-36.

The following points may briefly be mentioned in this connection. Firstly, he rejects all that seems to him vulgar and unworthy of his admired characters in 'Ramcaritmanas'. This is more obvious in the use of materials borrowed from Valmiki. Secondly, he is scrupulously conscious of the sanctity of his purpose for which he is writing the poem. A grandiloquence of prayers in the introductory portion of 'Ramcaritmanas' bears witness to it. Before the readers come to the main theme they are given an impression that a high and heavenly act is going to be performed on earth and they must be prepared to behold it. Anything short of this may profane the sacred cause for which the poem is written. Thirdly, he follows a middle course between Valmiki Ramayana and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' by abridging the former and amplifying the latter while casting his inquisitive glances at the works of other authors now and then. His work, therefore, is neither too long nor too short. This is done with a view to doing away the monotony of the 'Ramayana' and improving the aesthetic values of 'Adhyatma Ramayana'. Fourthly, by the variety of verses and episodic intensifications he makes the poem suit the literary and dramatic taste of cultured readers. Fifthly, he makes it serve a useful social and philosophical purpose.

The poem is unique in these respects and the readers forget its borrowed character while reading it.

I I

Earlier I have briefly referred to the reliance of Milton on his predecessors and his typical approach to the subject matter of his epic. Here I propose to examine in detail the quality and content of the sources which he used for writing his great epic. The prevalent idea of an epic in the time of Renaissance was that it was a large narrative poem with some reference to the gods and a grand hero. The gods became the part of myth and hero the part of history. The deeds of hero according to the Renaissance theory celebrate the nation in which the poem is produced. The hero is often seen as the founder of that nation. This concept did not totally suit the temperament of revolutionary Milton. He would not like to accept epic as a nationalistic genre nor a literary form of ancestor - worship. 'Paradise Lost' contains both, myth and history, yet is different from the conventional approach to myth and history for literary purpose. A survey of the epic before Milton will reveal many important informations about the kind of hero and quality of the form of epic which the world was familiar

with for centuries.

The Anglo-saxon Beowulf has the form and the hero conforming to Anglo-Saxon society. The society being primitive the hero of the epic is most active in single combat. The hero displays strength, courage and loyalty by conquering monsters and men. This can be the subject matter of military epic only and in an 'Iron age'. Such themes may have the relation with Babylonian myth wherein the supreme God glorifies his son Marduk. Marduk fights on the side of order and light against a female dragon named Tiamat and defeats her. Her forces include a host of devils and monsters. Marduk kills her by blowing into her mouth and putting an arrow into her underparts. Then he cuts her in two and of her two great halves makes heaven and earth. Milton's Sin is much more like Tiamat, snaky, an inhabitant of Chaos, spawner of the monster Death, and sexually related to Satan. In 'Paradise Lost' it is Satan who first conquers chaos - by travelling through it. The Greek epics 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' were composed perhaps 1500 years before the Anglo-Saxon. Though more primitive, as literature and in some cultural aspects they are more advanced. They still concentrate on warfare, but it is organized between armies. There are fights with monsters but there is also intervention

by anthropomorphic gods, and as the world is more complicated, so are the heroes. Achilles sulks, Odysseus travels home to a wife threatened by suitors and is tempted on the way by Circe. One extract from each 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' may give a better understanding of their nature:

> "The wrath of Achilies is my theme, that fatal wrath which, in fulfilling the will of Zeus, brought the Achaens so much suffering and sent the gallant souls of many noble men to Hades, leaving their bodies as carrion for the dogs and passing birds. Let us begin, goddess of song, with the angry parting that took place between Agamemnon, King of men and the great Achilles, son of Peleus. Which of the gods was it that made them quarrel?"[32]

> Tell me, Muse
> Of the man of many ways (Odysseus)
> Who was driven for journeys
> After he had sacked Troy's sacred citadel
> Many were they whose cities he saw
> Whose minds he learned of
> Many the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea
> Struggling for his own life and the home coming
> Of his companions.[33]

The Greek epics were composed orally and so was Anglo-Saxon Beowulf and perhaps by more than one author to be recited to the harp at feasts. In both those stages of epic we find repetitions, standardized phrases and so on to help

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[32]John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P; 1972, p.29.

[33]Ibid.,

memory and audibility. Oral poetry requires this. At a later stage with Virgil begins the age of writing epics in stead of orally producing it. The techniques of the oral epics were however carried on into the poetry of Virgil also. He writes epics to celebrate his nation. Aeneas was his hero, the legendry Trojan who escaped from Troy and founded Rome:

> "Of arms I sing and of the man who first, driven in exile from the coasts of Troy, came to Italy and Lavinian shores. In the end through much suffering poured on sea and land from Juno's resentless enmity, and through much also he endured in war, he was to build, a city and set up his gods in Latium; whence came the Laton race, the lords of Alba and the walls of lofty Rome."[34]

The oral techniques by the time of Virgil had become conventions. The production of epics was aimed at joining the present with the past.

During the middle Ages two more elements were added to the qualities of epics - romance and Christianity. This is a new stage in the history of epic. The romance contained Knight errantry, romantic love, magic and allegory. The most famous epics of the 16th Century were romantic. The dominance of a tribe on a nation gave way to Christendom.

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[34] John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P. 1972, p.30.

Why not ref. from Virgil ?

Aniosto's 'Orlando furioso' is about Charlemagne's defence of Christian Europe against the Saracens. There are several stories in it too and an ascent to the moon on a hippogrif to fetch back Orlando's lost sanity. The first stanza as translated by Sir John Harrington in 1591 is given below:[35]

Of dames, of Knights, of arms, of love's delight
Of courtesies, of high attempts, I speak.
Then the Moons transported all their might
Of africk seas, the force of France to break
Incited by the youthful heat and spite
Of agramont their king, that vowed to wreck
The death of King Traiano
Upon the Roman Emperor Chalemagne.

Another Italian poet Jorquato Jasso wrote an epic on the crusades.[36] Its hero is the crusader Godfrey of Boulogne who besieges Jerusalem. This is in an attempt of Europe to reassert itself against the races of south and east of Mediterranean. Ariosto glorifies the expansionist drive of Europe in terms of Charlemagne, Tasso in terms of the Crusades. Another stage in the writing of epic poems followed with the appearance of Edmund Spenser whose 'Fairy Queene', written between 1580-1590, though in unfinished form, is a highly patriotic poem. King Arthur stands as a national hero and queen Elizabeth as heroine. The ethoss is

[35]John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P. p.30.

[36]Ibid.,

that of Christian humanism, but the Knights in the poems direct their energies at perfecting their own behaviour rather than changing other people's. The virtues represented in the poem are holiness, temperance, truth, chastity and friendship.

With Milton an other new element entered into epic poetry. In Ariosto and Tasso Christianity had been the zeal of colonizing Europeans, merchant missionaries; in Spenser it was veiled in allegony which celebrated virtues of various kinds, Milton went deeper into the matter and did not accept Christianity merely as expanding religion in space and time. He wanted to deal with Christianity as world-wide and eternal religious truth; he wanted to be explicit. He considered it useful to write 'with a gravity and strictness which he felt to be both more pure and more classical, than the proliferant incident and decoration of the romantic epics.[37] In Anglo-Saxon England the Christian monks had composed Bible stories in heroic verses. These poems are 'Genesis', 'Exodus' and 'Christ and Satan'. Of these, Genesis A and Genesis B are more important than others. Milton may have seen some of these Bible poems. Here are some extracts translated by R.K. Gordon:[38]

[37]John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P. 1972, p.34.

[38]Ibid., p.35.

Genesis A

They performed naught in heaven save right and truth, till the leader of the angels in his pride fell into error. They would no longer follow in their own way of life, but turned from the love of God. They made great boasting that they could share with God the glorious abode, wide and radiant, amid the splendour of the host. Grief came upon them there, envy and presumption and the pride of that angel who first began to work and weave and stir up that wickedness, when, thirsting for strife, he declared that he would possess a dwelling and throne in the northern part of the kingdom of heaven .... Nothing had been wrought here as yet save darkness, but this wide land stood, sunk and dark, remote from God, empty and useless. The resolute king looked thereon with his eyes, and beheld the place bare of joys, saw the dark mist brooding in eternal night, black under the heavens, sombre and wastes, till at the command of the glorious king this creation came into being.

Genesis B

Satan uttered speech; he who henceforth must needs dwell in hell, have the abyss in his keeping, spoke in sorrow - he was once God's angel, radiant in heaven, until his mind led him stray, and his pride most strongly of all, so that he would not honour the word of the Lord of hosts, within him pride swelled about his heart, outside him was not grievous torment.

He spoke these words:

"This desolate place is very different from that other which once we knew, high heaven which my Lord gave me, though we could not hold it before the ruler of all ... Yet he has not done right

> to hurl us into the fiery abyss, to hot hell, reft of the heavenly realm. He has determined to people it with mankind. That to me is the greatest of griefs, that Adam, who was wrought from earth, shall not hold my mighty throne, dwell in bliss, and we suffer this torment, affliction is this hell. Alas! had I but the strength of my hands and could win free for one hour, but for a winter hour, then I with his host .... ! But around me lie iron bonds, the chain of the fetter is on me. I am powerless. The hard bonds of hell have seized me so closely. Here is a great fire above and beneath; never have I looked on loathlier landscape; the fire ceases not, hot throughout hell . . ."

Leaving aside many other writers of poems and mystery plays that deal with the themes of Romance and religion in restricted ways I refer here to Dante whose 'Divine Comedy' was a useful source of Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. The poem is heroic and religious; patriotic yet allegorical. The journey of Dante through the three parts of the poem, 'Inferno' 'Purgatorio' and 'Paradiso' contains many standard epic qualities. There are scenes more ghastly than Milton's hell:

> "As frogs before their enemy the snake all scatter through the water till each is squatting on the bottom; so saw I a thousand and more broken spirits fleeing from approach of one who Passed over Styx with sole unwet."

Paradise Lost Book I, 331-345:

> They heard, and we abasht, and up they sprung
> Upon the wing; as when men wont to watch

On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.

The 16th Century produced some more epics also. They strove to be more heroic than Dante but, at the same time more religious than Asiosto and Tasso. They story of the creation of the world was given epic form by these renaissance poets. It was clear that the interest had shifted from the life of Christ to the fall of man. The creation story also gave writers an opportunity to display their expanding scientific knowledge, and what they felt about it. The fall displayed the guilt that renaissance man felt, like Dr. Faustus, at knowing too much. The most typical and influential work was written by Guillaume du Bartas, a Huguenot, which was later translated into English by Joshua Sylvester under the title "Divine weeks and works". It became very popular throughout the 17th century. The first half was about the creation and fall, followed by the entire subsequent history of man. It was an enormous work which contained Christian mythology and doctrine, world history, popular ethics, and the whole corpus of geography, astronomy and Science. Here is an extract from Sylvester's "Divine weeks and works" which is closest to Paradise Lost in content and form:

Some have their heads grovelling betwixt their feet
As the inky cuttles and the many feet
Some in their breast, as crabs, some headless are,
Footless and finless (as the beneful hare
And heatful Oyster), in a heap confused
Their parts unparted, in themselves diffused
The Tyrian merchant of the Portuguese
Can hardly build one ship of many trees;
But of one tortoise, when he left to float
The Arabian fisherman can make a boat
And one such shell him in the stead doth stand
Of bulk at sea and of a house on land, etc.[39]

Here is another extract from the work of a writer named Hugo Grotius, a Dutch scholar and reformer with whom Milton was familiar by personal contact. Their education, career and religious and political attitudes were similar:

What is that creature moving with slantwise path
That crawls by winding ways and writes along to meet?
Its flat and scaly head twists back a hissing mouth
And snakes a three forked tongue, its two eyes gleam like fire,
. . . .
. . . .
Its coiling spiral twine and twist with hue of gold
Resplendent; in long slipping volutes it extends,
And folds its back in many a sinuous labyrith ....[40]

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[39] Week 1 Day 5
John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P. 1972, p.40.

[40] Ibid., p.41.

Eve sees the flaming sword keeping them out of Paradise :

> What sudden gleam is that?
> What light shines fiercely forth?
> A flame has caught the Garden and the lofty trees
> Are burning without fire, a gleaming conflagration
> That wanders hastily, as when the bright sky shines
> With cometry lights, the whole grave is ablaze.[41]

Another Italian dramatists Andreini, writes in 'Adams' in 1963 how Adam wakes from the creation of Eve out of his rib:

> What white and sacred rose in Heaven's garden
> Wet with empyreal dews have I beheld
> Open its bosom to these sums?[42]

A Dutch writer named Joost Van den Vondel in 1954 writes 'Lucifer' wherein Uriel describes the fall of Lucifer:

> As the clear day, turned to insensate night
> When the sun sinks, forgets to shine with gold
> So all his beauty, in that dread descent
> Changed to deformity, accursed and vile;
> The heroic visage to a brutish snout,
> His teeth to fangs, able to gnaw through steel;
> His feet and hands into four sorts of claws;

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[41]John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P., 1972, p.41.

[42]Ibid.,

The skin of opal to an inky hide,
Out of his bristled back burst dragon's wings.[43]

I have described a possibly long list of materials from which John Milton could prepare the framework of Paradise Lost. Italian and Dutch writers who had sung and dramatized the Adam and Eve story in one way or the other. With these materials Milton, for some time, experienced the difficulty of choice. Tragedy, he thought first, could be suitable mode of expression. Later he changed to epic which he believed would provide larger scope for his project. Further he chose Christianity in stead of Romance and patriotism which were the themes of Tasso, Ariosto, Dante and Spenser. Thus he writes epic and he writes on Christianity. Both these aspects have been dealt with in the works of many critics. These critics have so many controversies and to examine them here will land me into difficulties in coming to an impartial and detached judgement about the value of 'Paradise Lost'. Unlike the other epic writers of the past, as has been told, he decided to write a poem and not a history. But this happened to him at a later stage. First he began with a conviction that he had a burden to bear, a message to deliver, a poem to write which was to be an elaborate song to generations celebrating

[43] John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P., p.41.

the great work done for the church and people of England, a reform of reformation. But this was followed by a long and bitter process of disillusionment which resulted in the abandonment of thought of an historical poem, and what took place in its place was the indictment of human weakness. The poem, therefore, possesses no appeal if one wants to find in it a chapter of history as the Greeks saw in the 'Iliad'. But the theological position of the poem, its central justification of God's ways to men must need be discussed for a while. That Milton recognizes that some justification is needed, and therefore lays such stress on man's complete freedom, is something, and distinguishes Milton from his Calvinist contemporaries who believed in the doctrine of determinism. Milton insisted on finding an intelligible, a reasonable justification. Adam was created free and he was forewarned of what may follow as a result of disobedience to an arbitrary command. But he chose to disobey under the influence of his love for Eve and thereby entailed on all his unhappy posterity guilt, and a deprav'd will which led only too easily to fresh falls and the continuous degeneration of mankind. God, indeed, by the death of His son has relieved those who accept that Atonement of their inherited guilt, and by His grace helps

those who strive to recover their freedom and render God service due to Him. But those who accept are few and never will be many. Such a justification is quite a different thing from Pope's attempt to "vindicate God's ways to man." Milton's defence of God's condemnation of the whole race in Adam in the 'De Doctrina' is rather on the lines of Butler's 'Analogy'. This entailing of the sin of the parents on the children is in line with the way God works:[44]

> "It is however a principle uniformly acted on in the divine proceedings, and recognized by all nations and under all religions from the earliest period, that the penalty incurred by the violation of things sacred (and such was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) attaches not only to the criminal himself but to the whole of his posterity. It was this in the Deluge etc. .... God declares this to be method of justice. . . . . Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children t.. into the third and fourth generation of them that hate me etc. etc."

It is a little strange to hear Milton speaking of the tree as a holy thing, in view of his general refusal to recognize holiness in things at all. Is he not here confounding the holiness of principles, of justice, etc., and the sacredness of tabus, the breach of which entails mischief on good and bad alike? These and similar things in 'Paradise Lost'

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[44] H.J.C. Grierson: Milton And Wordsworth, Chatto & Windus, London, 1963, p.96.

cause difficulties to the readers. We cannot read the poem without troubling ourselves about the theology of the poem, for the poem is a Christian poem. Mr. Tillyard feels that this great poem of Milton is pessimistic, and attributes this tone to the failure of the poet's high hopes. But it must be remembered that the pessimism, so far as it is made explicit, is inherent in the Evangelicalism, indeed is inherent in Christianity in any form that is historical: 'Many are called but few are chosen'. The great scheme of salvation will benefit only the few, the Elect. The poem was welcomed by Protestant Christianity from Ellwood, Addison, and others to Cowper, Foster, and the nineteenth century Evangelicals. The chief reason for this is that all the main and prominent doctrines of the poem are those of Evangeligical Protestant. It avoided only the Calvinist doctrine of determinism. Everything else is in the poem - the fall (through man's own free will); the corruption (though not the complete corruption) of man's will through the fall, the Atonement through the Death of Christ; the renewal of man's will through the spirit, the Grace of God.

If 'Paradise Lost' seems to many people today imperfectly Christian in spirit, it is not because of any

explicitly heretical doctrines the poem gives expression to, such as Arianism, but because Milton's scale of values is not that of the Orthodox and sincere Christian, Evangeligical or Catholic. The two of the doctrines - the Atonement and the Doctrine of Divine Grace - may be referred to in brief. It is not accurate to say that Milton ignores the atoning death of Christ in his 'Paradise Regained' and makes the temptation great atonement as has been said by some critics. The temptation is expressly declared to be preparatory to the death:

> But first I mean
> To exercise him in the wilderness,
> There he shall first lay down the rudiments
> Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
> To conquer sin and Death the two grand foes,
> By humiliation and strong sufferance.[45]

The only thing, of course, can be said that the thought of Christ's atoning death does not move Milton in the same passionate way as it moves the Evangeligical poet of:

> There is a fountain fill'd with blood
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins[46]

Or the Catholic Crashaw

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[45]John Milton, Paradise Regain'd I, ll. 155-61.

[46]William Cowper: Olney Hymns XV, 'Praise for the Fountains Opened'.

Jesu no more, it is full tide
From thy head and from thy feet
From thy hands and from thy side
All the purple rivers meet.
. . . .
This thy blood's deluge, a dire chance
Dear Lord to thee, to us is found
A deluge of deliverance
A deluge least we should be drown'd.[47]

This is because Milton had seen much of this emotional religion and come to believe that it was a source of weakness as well as of strength, made for a self-centred regard for personal salvation rather than such a reform of Church and state as he longed for. To him the Atonement appears as a legal transaction, once carried through, by which the debt incurred by Adam had been paid and man set free again to serve God by the right use of his will.

The doctrine of God's divine grace receives the same kind of treatment in Paradise Lost as the doctrine of atonement. There is difference between his express recognition of the doctrine and the value he attaches to it. To recover the full freedom forfeited by the fall man needs the grace of God:

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[47]Crashaw: Upon the Bleeding Crucifix, 'A Song'.

> Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood
> Praying, for from the Mercy-seat above
> Prevenient grace descending had removed
> The stone from their hearts, and made new flesh
> Regenerate grow instead,[48]

But in practice he seems to lay small stress on grace as communicated directly through the mediation of sacraments. Man's will is free, and on himself it depends whether tempted he falls like Adam, or overcomes every temptation like Christ, or falling repents and sincerely repenting recovers his freedom like Samson. Man is free and thereby responsible for what happens to him in this world and the next. To prolong the discussion on this aspect any more may put me to the risk of being drifted away from the main issue. In brief, I would conclude now by saying that Milton chose Christianity in stead of patriotism and romance. The feat of heroic performances of deadly duels is transformed into a display of angelic gymnastics; the glamorous romantic adventures give way to confrontation between the God and the fallen angels. There is an expedition of the fallen angel to the prohibited realms of the chosen being of God with a malicious purpose. These are treated on gigantic scale. Milton interweaves his own concept of Christianity, political ideology and cosmology throughout the poem. Thus the materials borrowed from the earlier works are synthesized in the

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[48] P.L., XI, ll. 1-5.

Miltonic mould. And this is the unique creation of Milton. Christianity is not treated as something sovereign in itself. It is humanized by the poet in 'Paradise Lost.'

Now coming to the other aspect, that is, the framework of Paradise Lost, it must be repeated that Milton adopted epic and not tragedy in spite of his earlier leaning towards it. The theme of epic has already been discussed. It has been said that epic poetry in Milton aspired to achieve solemnity and religious bias than earlier found in the poetry of Homer or Beowulf. Virgil had, of course, guided Milton by indicating that the future epic should have religious subject. This was an elevation of epic poetry to a sacred position. This caused the need for an elevated style for that kind of poetry. As Milton had entered into an obligation of writing epic by his own well considered choice it lay on him the responsibility of evolving a style different from those who had written epic earlier. This is in brief the clue to the understanding of the epic style of 'Paradise Lost'. The theme of 'Paradise Lost' is not of the kind where there are spacious halls or sacred elevated altars, or a grand feast or a glamorous pursuit of suitors or even big battles between two countries, which all can take place on the earth alone. Milton has introduced non-human

personages in his epic and everything is supposed to happen in the imaginary spheres of Heaven, Hell, chaos and Paradise. The readers are compelled to activate their minds to have a corresponding response in the airy-world of Milton's cosmology. This is a tough job and Milton adopts a new technique in absence of external aids to solemnity for the abstract theme of his epic. According to Professor C. S. Lewis this technique consists of the following methods. Firstly, he uses unfamiliar words and constructions including archaisms. Secondly, he uses proper names for the splendid remote, terrible, voluptuous or celestial things. Thirdly, he makes use of allusions to all the sources of hightened interest in our sense experience (light, darkness, storm, flowers, jewels, sexual love and the like), but all over-topped and managed with an air of magnanimous austerity. Hence comes the feeling of sensual excitement without surrender or relaxation, the extremely tonic, yet also extremely rich, quality of our experience while we read. But all this may happen in poems which are not epic. Milton's distinction lies in persistent manipulation of his readers by these things. He makes the readers feel that they are attending an actual recitation and they are nowhere allowed to settle down and luxuriate on any one line or paragraph.

To analyse the manipulation of the readers by Milton throughout the poem we may first examine the opening paragraph. The philosophical purpose of the poem being the justification of the ways of God to man appears to be of secondary importance. The main function of the following lines is to give us the sensation that something great is now about to happen:

Of man's First Disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the world, and all our woe
With loss of 'Eden' till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of 'Oreb' or of 'Sinai' didst inspire
That Shephered. . . . .
In the beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos . . . .
. . . . I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
. . . . while it persues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rime.
And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st
. . . .
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
. . . .
. . . . What is in me dark
Illumin, what is low raise and support;

That to the hight of this great Argument
I may assent Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.[49]

This is in line with the great spiritual preparation of the readers to receive something of holy nature found in the opening of 'Ramcaritmanas'. It is a great art and if the poet can successfully give that impression to the readers his purpose is served for the rest of the book. Milton has succeeded in this respect in 'Paradise Lost' as much as Tulasi Das in 'Ramcharitmanas'. Milton achieves this firstly by the quality of weight produced by the fact that nearly all the lines end in long, heavy mono-syllables. Secondly, the deep spiritual preparation is suggested by use of allusions, such as - 'O spirit that dost prefer' and 'What in me is . . . dark, illumene' or 'Dove-like satst brooding', etc.

Thus Milton while depending on the resources of various kinds mentioned in the preceding lines, creates his own unique entity in 'Paradise Lost' in the same way as Tulasi Das does in 'Ramcaritmanas'. He does this both in substance and in form. The substance, being one of Christian ideologies, is not exactly as he found in the earlier Biblical writings. Milton quotes God's words in Exodus 8:17: 'I Have

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[49]P.L., I, ll. 1-26.

come down from that place to liberate them ...... and to lead them out into a good land.' 'In fact', Milton adds dryly, 'they perished in the desert.' God's decrees are always conditional on Man's freedom of action. He wills the good, but men may refuse to co-operate. The essential point is human responsibility. Men cannot blame God if they freely choose to fall. And if adversity comes - then they must analyse and learn from their mistakes. Similarly in the matter of structure Milton knew all about Homer, Virgil Beowulf, Tasso, Ariosto, Dante and Spenser. But he made his style peculiarly different. He introduced a grand style of playing upon the imagination of his readers whose minds he continually kept under his control by presentation of his cosmic world through allusions, similes, rime and the narrative style by making one stroke of creative and surpassing genius follow another. The following few lines may well sum up the achievement of Milton:

> Three poets in three distant ages born
> Greece, Italy, England did adorn
> The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd
> The next in majesty; in both the last.
> The force of nature could no further go:
> To make a third she join'd the other two.[50]

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[50]John Broadbent: Paradise Lost, Introduction, C.U.P. 1972, p.57.

Thus greatness of Milton lies in producing a synthesis. In Milton there is no struggle between the Pagan and Christian element. They are not being kept in water-tight compartments but being organised together to produce a whole. Thus fusion is the characteristic of his style. His hesitation between the classical and the romantic types of epic which runs through all his works establishes a *co-existence of* apparent opposites. Similarly, his rebelliousness, his individualism, and his passionate love of liberty co-exist with his equal love for discipline and respect for hierarchy in his works.

CHAPTER-IV

TREATMENT OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN PARADISE LOST AND RAMCARITMANAS

The treatment of women in Milton and Tulasi Das is of special interest from several points of view. These two poets have been subjected to controversial opinions for their attitudes towards women. In this chapter I shall examine the various aspects of this topic. To begin with Milton we find that he has treated women with his rigid notion about them. His ideas in respect of other institutions developed through events and years but not of womankind. He had been interested in girls even when he was 18. It was at this age in 1626 that Milton wrote to Deodati a Latin poem to record his erotic feelings. He mentions in Elegy I watching "the girls passing by like stars." In his most lascivious piece (Elegy V) when he was twenty he wrote "Lustful Faunus hunts some Oread to ravish and the nymph looks with trembling knees to hide herself." In Elegy VII (1927-28) he admitted or pretended to a first love, but the girl he saw 'was borne away, never to return to my sight'. A year later he was fascinated by an Italian girl called Emila but nothing came out of this. After this, despite

his fascination for the fair sex, he spent a long period of twelve years as a celebate suppressing his passion. In 1642 when he married Mary Powell who was 16 year old, two years less than half of his age, it was suspected that he had done it more for satisfying his sexual need than for seriously fulfilling matrimonial obligations consequent upon this union. The ill-matched and hasty union with Mary Powell under stringent circumstances of her family can not belie the suspicion. Not contrary to the general expectation this marriage proved disastrous for him. Milton who was himself a teacher of repute was taught a shocking lesson by a young wife who deserted him all on a sudden without giving him any notice for making amends to the mistrust and monotony which had obsessed her mind in the house of Milton. Humiliation, despair and frustration deepened rather than eroded the erotic feeling of Milton. This event had a provocative effect on him. The dislocation of his long harboured passions for a marital consummation of the union of himself with a woman, provoked him to come out with a series of splendid expressions about woman, marriage and divorce. He seemed determined to bring about a revolutionary change in the institution of marriage despite confrontation with the Church and the Parliament. The return of Mary after sometime

with an attitude of surrender and apology to Milton did not stop him.

I have described in bfief the amorous period of Milton's life to discover the foundation of his attitude towards women. In spite of his determined dedication to a solemn pledge of living an austere life in preparation for writing a poem 'doctrinal to the nation' Milton, in his sub-consciousness, remained unchanged about women. Leaving aside the other female characters for later discussion I shall take up Eve of 'Paradise Lost' first whom Milton produced at the height of his cultured thoughts. Unlike Tulasi Das Milton does not present many female characters to act variously according to their stations and qualities. In the crowd of fallen angels scheming as terrible devils against the benevolent design of God there is no female demon. In Tulasi Das there are both male and female demons playing their roles in 'Ramcaritmanas'. In the whole Paradise Lost which is a longer epic than 'Ramcaritmanas' Eve is the only female character with whom Milton works with his disciplined and cultured concepts of womanhood to reveal his total attitude towards women. The God, the Son, Adam, the angels and others are all male. The idea that one woman is

enough to represent her sex had ironically a firm grip of Milton's mind. The creation of Eve out of Adam's flesh to provide him with a consort is presumably the result of Milton's endeavour to draw a woman before the fall. But the uncontrollable vice of curiosity and levity tempts her to a desire of knowing future things. This folly of Eve is the cause of her fall. The languages of the unfallen Eve and the fallen Eve in 'Paradise Lost' literally differ but the tone persists to continue, Milton caricatures Eve in two spheres to behave and talk differently. But the erotic feelings of Milton which he had ceaselessly and unconsciously nursed reflect sometimes in and sometimes out of the contexts of the poem.

Let us take first the unfallen Eve, conceived as the first finest female person, to consort the first male person of supreme wisdom, obedience and fortune. These inhabitants of Eden, destined to forfeit Paradise by their foolishness and infirmities, join each other at the very first meeting in a manner unbecoming of their deemed stature. Eve plays her part more ostensibly and shows that she falls short of her conceived height even before the fall. The erotic terms in which Eve is depicted create doubts about Milton's success in treatment of Eve:

She as a veil down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden trees's wore
Disshevel'd, but in Wanton ringlets wav'd
As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway
And by her yielded, by him best received
Yielded with coy, submission, modest pride
And sweet reluctant amorous delay.[1]

The words used here and the gestures of Eve are expressions of earthly erotic feelings rather than revelations of divine grace. 'Subjection', 'coy submission' and 'sweet reluctant amorous delay' fit in more with English erotic poetry than with a great poem which was planned to become 'doctrinal to a nation'. How does Adam lead and how does Eve proceed may reveal more of what I propose to examine here:

To the Nuptial Bower
I led her blushing like the Moon; All Heav'n
And happy constellation on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill
Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and the gentle Air
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spice shrubs
Disporting till amorous Bird of Night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening Star
On his Hill top, to light the bridal lamp.[2]

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[1]P.L., IV, ll. 304-310.
[2]P.L., VIII, ll., 510-520.

Outside the context, the language of the passage may not offend the feelings. But to readers of Paradise Lost it is disappointing to find that the first human pair with a fair fortune of imperishable habitation in the Paradise were provoked first by mere sexual desires. Being close to each other in amorous confrontation their physical conduct is a prelude to gratification of sexual desires. Eve shows superior inclinations in this respect. Milton has thus treated Eve wrongly:

> With tresses discomposed and glowing cheek
> As through unquiet rest: he on his side
> Leaning half - rais'd, with look of Cordial Love
> Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
> Beauty, which whether waking or sleep
> Shot forth peculiar graces,............[3]

Milton's failure to draw Eve as the first mother of mankind becomes glaring in the context of her position before the fall when the consciousness of bodily charm and shame was non-existent in her mind. To defend Milton's treatment one must distinguish bodily shame as we know it from some kind of bashfulness or modesty which can be conceived as existing before the fall. But the words and the conduct belie such

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[3] P.L., V, ll. 10-15.

defence. I may quote C.S. Lewis here at length to support this view.

> "It appears to me that we can, in fact, make some such distinction. People blush at praise - not only praise of their bodies, but praise of anything that is theirs. Most people exhibit some kind of modesty or bashfulness, at least at the beginning, in receiving any direct statement of another human being's affection for them, even if that affection is quite unrelated to sex on to the body at all. To be 'valued' is an experience which involves a curious kind of self-consciousness. The subject is suddenly compelled to remember that it is also an abject, and, apparently, an object intently regarded: hence in a well-ordered mind, feelings of unworthiness and anxiety, mingled with delight, spring up. There seems to be a spiritual, as well as physical, nakedness, fearful of being found ugly, embarrassed even at being found lovely, reluctant (even when not amorously reluctant) to be found at all. If this is what we mean by shame we may, perhaps, conclude that there was shame in Paradise. We may, I think, go further and suppose that even without the fall sexual love would have excited this kind of shame in a specially strong degree; for in sexual love the subject is not completely forced to realise that it is an object. But that is quite the furthest we can go. All that part of shame which is specially connected with the body, which depends on an idea of indecency, must be completely ruled out. And I do not think that it can be ruled out while we are reading Milton. His Eve exhibits modesty too exclusively in sexual contexts, and his Adam does not exhibit at all. There is even a strong and (in the circumstances) a most offensive suggestion to male desire. I do not mean that Milton's love passages are objectionable by normal human standards; but they are not consistent with what he himself believes about the world before the fall."[4]

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[4] C.S. Lewis: A Preface to Paradise Lost, pp.123-24.

The conduct of Eve contradicts her own purpose. Being the first mother of mankind born with perfect virgin innocence of the feminine wiles and crafts in the Eden she speaks to Adam:

> Part of my soul I seek thee and thee claim
> My other half: with that thy gentle hand
> Seis'd mine, I yielded, and from that time see
> How beauty is excelled by manly grace
> And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.[5]

But the following lines reverse the impression:

> So spake our general Mother and with eyes
> Of conjugal attraction unreprov'd
> And meek surrender, half embracing lean'd
> On our first father, half her swelling breast
> Naked met his under the flowing Gold
> Of her loose tresses hid: he in dèlight
> Both of her beauty and submissive charms
> Smiled with superior Love.[6]

Milton's aim at presenting Eve in Paradise in total unawareness of her own faminine charms in relation to Adam's graceful masculine conduct achieves little success. His phrase 'naked majesty' and lines:

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[5] P.L. IV, ll. 487-491.

[6] Ibid., IV, ll. 491-498.

> 'Non those mysterious parts were then concealed and then
> So passed they naked on'

bring out the suppressed erotic feelings of Milton rather than a correct picture of Eve. This kind of treatment of the first mother of mankind in relation to the circumstances of the Paradise is inconsistent with the theme of 'Paradise Lost' and is destructive of his own purpose, Milton applies to a celestial theme a normal human standard. C.S. Lewis remarks "The trouble is that the poet hardly seems to be aware of the magnitude of his own undertaking." It is also complained that Milton treated the first parents with "intolerable freedom". The conduct of Eve and Adam gives us an impression of honey-moon of a human couple joined by love marriage and led by human impulses rather than the majestic movements of a blessed pair of the Paradise who are united by divine mandate. They can be, on that account, admired but not adored by the readers of 'Paradise Lost'. I have discussed the position of Eve before the fall because she was conceived by the poet to behave and act as a super-woman of replendent aroma in that state. My intention has been to reveal that despite his high thoughts Milton, unknowingly, lapsed into the lustful infirmities of his youthful elegies on his personal feelings about the women in

relation to men. I shall turn to a discussion of the Fallen Eve later.

I I

Tulasi Das, unlike Milton, has drawn the characters of many women in 'Ramcaritmanas'. It is but natural that his ideas also must have been formed by the events of his life as was the case with Milton. Whereas other events of his life are quite different from those of Milton, events that associate him with a woman are similar, Tulasi Das married a woman named Ratnawali and fell deeply in love with her. His marriage was neither hasty nor ill-matched nor did it create any doubt about its success. In spite of this, destiny played her part. Tulasi Das, too fond of his wife, followed her to her parents' house only to receive unexpected and shocking rebukes from her. It was unexpected because she had indeed as much love for him as he had for her. It was shocking because he was repulsed by one whom he fondly desired. How his wife spoke when he countenanced her in her chamber has already been described in the first chapter. This was certainly a more violent and open rejection of the love of Tulasi by his wife than the silent,

though shocking, disappearance of Mary Powell from the house of Milton. These parallel events in the lives of these two poets provoked different thoughts. Milton, terribly despaired, took to war and staged a confrontation while Tulasi Das, miraculously transformed, plunged into the mysteries of human nature and with a calm resignation detached himself permanently from amorous associations. This provides a base for understanding the attitude of Tulasi Das towards woman. As Eve and Adam are the admirable personages of 'Paradise Lost' so Seeta and Rama are the adored deities of Tulasi Das in 'Ramcaritmanas'. There can be no comparison between Rama and Adam or Seeta and Eve. But poetic parts of Milton and Tulasi Das can be examined with benefits to find out their attitudes towards women of their conceived ideals. Eve has partly been examined. I shall discuss now how Tulasi Das draws Seeta. Seeta is not the first woman as Eve is in 'Paradise Lost' though she is a fully developed female character as Eve is. Eve and Seeta do not develop but only act and behave as developed characters. Seeta changes her place from her father's house to her husband's palace and shows her disciplined behaviour in conformity with the expectations of the changed place and people with whom she has new relations now. She possesses

the competence and qualities needed for the occasion. The circle of Eve is limited to one person only and for human fellowship she has none but Adam in 'Paradise Lost'. Seeta has to encounter and adjust with a number of women and men in the palace and she ably succeeds. Eve has failed even in her limited circle to adjust and harmonise the life with her own chosen lord.

Tulasi Das accords a special status to Seeta in 'Ramcaritmanas'. She is to him the mother as Rama is the father not of the mankind only but of the universe also. They are born as human beings despite their imperishable divine entity. Seeta's conduct in her parents' house is in conformity with her position as a daughter, she acts again as a wife, a daughter-in-law and so on as a conformist in the palace of Rama. She appears on a number of occasions before others and acts as the occasion demands. It is by chance that Seeta is brought to countenance Rama first in the garden where both are unknowingly drawn towards each other by reciprocal remembrance of a past tie. Tulasi Das, a poet of eminence, arranges the meeting in such a way as must not impair his adoration for Seeta and Rama. To prevent from lapsing into erotic impulses he does not bring in

either Seeta or Rama to meet in seclusion. Rama is accompanied by Lakshman and Seeta by her maiden friends. The situation does not allow any one to imagine that Rama and Seeta may meet in the style of Adam and Eve. They cast their spell on each other and on others. They are conditioned to remain within graceful limits and their behaviour does not fall short of the expectations of the readers. Nothing looks 'offensive'. A description of the garden in Janakpur where Rama and Seeta notice each other for the first time is necessary for a comparative study of Seeta and Rama with their counterparts, Eve and Adam. Rama and Lakshman are presented into the garden seeking flowers:

> They beheld the lovely garden of the King
> Which had enchanted even the Spring;
> Various lovely trees there grew
> And creepers made canopies of many hues,
> Flowers, fruits and fresh leaves in abundance
> Humbled the tree of Paradise to shame,
> Birds like patridges, parrots, koels and cuckoos
> Sang sweet notes and peacock danced gracefully,
> In the midst of trees there was a lovely lake
> Where steps of jewels were skilfully made,
> In its transparent water bloomed lotus of various hues
> Water fowls were chirping and bees were humming too.[7]

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[7] _Ramcaritmanas_, B.K., ll. 226d, 4-15.

The scene resembles Eden in all respect. It is here that Seeta gets occasion to see Rama. One of her maiden friends informs and Seeta

'Was delighted deeply to hear her speech
Her eyes became impatient to see.
Led by her dear friends she did proceed
None her past love could perceive,
The words of Narad she remembered
And was aroused to sacred feelings of love,
She began to watch with her restless eyes
In all directions like a fawn terrified.[8]

Reciprocally on the part of Rama Tulasi Das syas:

Rama heard the sound of bracelets
Of girdle bells and anklets,
He was then at heart amazed,
And to Lakshman he spoke:
Methink, Cupid has sounded his drum
Having desired the universe to conquer,
He spoke thus and there beheld
His eyes became patridge to Seeta's moon-like face.
. . . .
Rama was delighted to behold Seeta's face
He wondered at heart but could not express
It seemed Brahma had revealed
In a form to the world all his skill
. . . .

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[8] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 228d, 13-20.

Thus Rama praised at heart Seeta's grace
And then wondered at his own state,
To Lakshman he spoke with sacred thoughts
According to the occasion as it was
. . . .
Though chaste by nature my mind is disturbed
Her resplendent beauty to observe
The reason for all only Brahma may know
But O brother! my graceful limbs throb, behold.[9]

Rama is moved by the infinite beauty of Seeta as much as Seeta is unconsciously enchanted by the massive grace of Rama. At heart both are drawn by irresistible attachment for each other. None can doubt that they should have become another Adam and Eve in the garden of the King being subdued by their amorous impulses. Tulasi Das performs a responsible function by keeping them apart physically until another suitable time. The concept of control over the instincts of sex on the part of a virgin and an adolescent bachelor heightens the stature of both in the esteem of the readers. Seeta's concern for Rama is deepened by delay. The union that follows later after marriage does not forecast failure. It bears fruits of loyalty, obedience and faith. Adam and Eve on the other hand get hastily united. There is no control over their impulses and their love for each other is not

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[9] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 229d, 1-22, 230d, 6-9.

disciplined. Eve, therefore, disobeys the command of God and of her husband and eats the apple to bring disaster to herself and to her chosen partner. Tulasi Das has conceived of Rama and Seeta as a disciplined pair always well within the limits of decency and admiration. Milton is apt to describe the naked Eve frequently perhaps to drive home the thoughts that beauty lies in nakedness. Her body is un-adorned by any external beautifying object. Only the golden tresses cover certain parts of naked body. This is a primitive concept and does not fit in with the concept of Paradise. Tulasi Das conceives of a highly civilized culture and Seeta's body is adorned by all fine objects of advanced civilisation. The unadorned naked beauty of Eve leaves no scope for Adam to conceive of higher things. Everything is open and obvious to him. Seeta's beauty excels all concept of beauty to occupy a unique position:

> The beauty of Seeta graced beauty too
> In a house of beauty a lamp she looked
> All similes the poets have already touch'd
> How shall I compare the daughter of Janak?[10]

A naked beauty becomes limited by its ostensibility. An adorned and clothed beauty transcends description and the

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[10] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 229d, 13-16.

admiration it receives is infinite. The poet has also then plenty of ideas to imagine. From the lines quoted above it is clear that the attitude of Tulasi Das towards Seeta is not only respectable but admirable also. Discipline, dignity, decorum and deep consciousness of her own feminine grace adds to the respect for Seeta. This is lacking in Eve who remains imperfectly drawn even in her primitive position by Milton. She plays a second fiddle to the wayward male impulses of John Milton. The next premarital meeting of Seeta and Rama follows later in 'Swayamvar'. They are now in a larger crowd where amorous feelings cannot play their role. The occasion is tense indeed and full of suspense but it intensifies the attachment of Seeta and Rama to each other. Left to themselves Rama and Seeta would probably take no time to behave like Adam and Eve. And if they do not behave that way the scene would seem to be unnatural. In both the ways they shall become lowered in esteem. Tulasi Das keeping in conformity with the tradition of Hindu society prevents them from such lapses by putting some barriers between them. He brings in, therefore, a crowd of men and women, the kings and spectators. The bow of Shiva provides a test to assess the valour of kings. The delay it causes by its invincibility gives scope and opportunity for the love of Seeta for Rama to grow deeper. The failure of each

king to lift the bow only adds by degree to the glamour of the victory to be attained by Rama later. This is an art by which the poet honours his adored hero. The love of Seeta at its height in the 'Swayamvar' is kept within the bounds of integrity. She remains disciplined even when under uncontrollable situation:

> In the midst of her friends she looked as if
> Supreme beauty reign'd in the midst of beauties,
> The garland of victory graced her lotus hands
> The victory of the universe it proclaimed.
> Her gestures were languid and mind was filled with joy
> Deep love she possessed which no one saw.
> Having gone to Rama his beauty she beheld
> And stood like the figure of picture deeply amazed
> Her wise friends advised having noticed;
> Offer to Rama the garland of victory
> Seeta heard it and raised her hands
> Overpowered by love she was unable to garland.[11]

Here is a couple of Tulasi Das confronting each other with feelings of infinite love. Their conduct invites our admiration. Milton's pair fall short of such conduct. It may be presumed that conceptually Milton should have risen higher than Tulasi Das. Eve is the first woman deemed to be the mother of human race. The description of her body should

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[11] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 263d, 1-12.

give no occasion to mutilate the motherly attitude of the readers towards her. Her gestures in the company of Adam command no better respect than any fair woman could receive from her male partner by virtue of her being charming. I am reminded again of what Milton had written at the age of 30 in his Latin Elegy on Deodati at his death. In 'Epilaphuim', he imagines of Deodati provided with a sexual heaven:

"Because the blush of shame, and youth
Without a stain, were dear to you
Because you did not taste
The delights of the marriage-bed,
! the trophies of virginity
Are laid up for you ...."

This concept of sex even in Heaven gives an impression that Milton's awareness of and interest in sexual pleasure has a character of continuity which transcends even death. It is astonishing to note that it was at about this time that he had decided to live an austere life to prepare himself for the great and 'doctrinal' poem. In Elgy VI he wrote :

> But if a poet sings of wars, of Heavens controlled by a Jove full grown, of duty - doing heroes, of captains that are half Gods, if he sings now the holy counsels for the gods above, now the realms deep below wherein howls a savage hound, let him live a simple, frugal life, after the fashion

> of the teacher who came from Samos, let herbs offer food that works no harm .... On such a poet are imposed, too, youth free of crime, pure and chaste, and a character unyielding, and a name without taint........ for the bard is sacred to the gods, he is first of the gods; the secret deeps of his soul, and his very lips alike breathe forth Jove.

Despite what Milton wrote in this Elegy he succeeded only imperfectly in his plan. In the description of Eve there are obvious eruptions of way-ward youthful feelings of his earlier life. These lines confirm the view:

> Into the inmost bower
> Handed they went; and eas'd the putting off
> These troublesome disguises which we wear
> Strait side by side were laid, nor turn'd I ween
> 'Adam' from his fair spouse, nor 'Eve' the Rites
> Mysterious of connubial Love refus'd.[12]

The description accompanied by intended acts may do more harm to the poet of high theme than good.

Tulasi Das far excels Milton in this respect. His description of not only Seeta but Parvati also can prove it. Parvati possesses marvellous beauty and grace. She is married to Shiva and her love for him is of infinite quality.

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[12] P.L., IV, ll. 738-43.

Tulasi Das describes the conduct of Parvati and Shiva with the same dignified restrain as of Seeta and Rama in 'Ramcaritmanas'. The poet is more conscious of the magnitude and stature of the object than of his own erotic feelings. He describes the beauty of Parvati:

> All the gods were enchanted to behold the beauty of Parvati,
> Who is the poet in the world to describe it?
> Silently the gods paid their regards,
> Knowing, mother of the universe and wife of Shiva she was
> Of beauty Bhawani herself is perfection
> Not ten millions of tongues can give description
> Marvellous beauty of the mother of the universe
> Not even millions of tongues can put in words
> Vedas, Shesa and Saraswati hesitate to speak
> Then who can count the dull-headed Tulasi?[13]

After the marriage Shiva and Parvati have left for Kailash, their permanent abode. Tulasi Das carefully describes the situation and in stead of describing at length the espousal of Shiva he closes the scene by saying:

> Shambhu and Bhawani are the parents of the universe
> Hence I describe not in detail how they loved.

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[13] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11, 99d, 7-16.

III

I have examined how Milton has treated Eve before the fall in 'Paradise Lost' and how Tulasi Das has treated Seeta and Parvati in 'Ramcaritmanas' in respect of their male counterparts. In the following lines I shall deal with the remaining aspect of Eve in 'Paradise Lost' and discuss how the attitude of Tulasi Das is comparable to the attitude of Milton towards women. Eve conceived as the first woman, is ostensibly never free from frailties of female sex at any stage of her life in Eden. These frailties are assigned to her by Milton rather subconsciously. Before the fall she is prone to give way to her instincts of falling into undesirable lapse. After the fall she behaves in conformity with the consequences of her misconduct. This is by no means unexpected. Milton wished to produce Eve before the fall as a perfect woman totally free from the vices and infirmities. In spite of Milton's perseverance Eve seems to exhibit the latent fickleness of her nature even before the fall. At the sight of Adam she is promptly fascinated by his charm and qualities and yields to his desires without any other thought. This indicates the weakness of her character and instincts for temptation which compelled her later to obey Satan and disobey God. Here is a turning point in the 'Paradise Lost' to release Milton

from his disciplined thoughts about Eve. She tastes the fruit and falls. Everything changes, her attitude towards Adam under the injury of the shock undergoes a disastrous change. Eve, before the fall - 'He for God only, she for God in him' - behaves now as the harm - doer of Adam. To refer back for an examination of the relationship between Eve and Adam I quote the following lines which will reveal the original notion of the poet, his motive and purpose in creating Eve:

> Though both
> Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd
> For contemplation he and valour formed
> For softness she and sweet attractive grace
> He for God only, she for God in him.[14]

It is clear that Adam is a chosen deity of Eve. But there is no one else in the Eden. Eve has no alternative perhaps to make other choice. She is prompted by Satan to eat the forbidden fruit. Does it not lead us to think that there being another 'Adam' Eve could have valued her love in the relative context? If she cares not for the danger of eating the prohibited fruit for pleasing her temptations can she not use her temptation for falling in love with another

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[14]P.L., IV, ll. 295-299.

'Adam' in the Eden? This becomes clear from the following lines in Book IX of the Paradise Lost:

> Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
> As yet my change, and give him to partake
> Full happiness with me, or rather not,
> But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
> Without co-partner? So to add what wants
> In Female sex, more to draw his love
> And render me more equal and perhaps,
> A thing not undesirable, sometime
> Superior, for inferior who is free?
> This may be well; but what if God has seen
> And death ensue? Then I shall be no more
> And 'Adam' wedded to another 'Eve'
> Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct,
> A death to think.[15]

The forbidden fruit is just as any fruit could be. In itself it has no miracle. But since it is forbidden the eating of it involves a violation of a holy command. The fruit detached from the prohibitory mandate will be as harmless as other fruits. What we must notice here with concern is the conduct of Eve in disregarding the mandate. Eve defiles her conscience and will. The knowledge which she desires

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[15] P.L. IX, ll. 817-30.

to gain by defiling her conscience and will can not lead her to happier life. Thus while aspiring for knowledge Eve stoops into ignorance and misconceives the situation in which she is acting. C.S. Lewis has said that the apple is merely an apple. It is not a 'condensed encyclopedia'. "Its sole virtue was a plege, and a pledge broken Adam and Eve win no knowledge at all in the sense of understanding but only the experience of misery." The apple is chosen for a wrong purpose and on false grounds. At the cost of higher good it produces no knowledge save that of

> Good lost, Evil got
> Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know.[16]

'If the fall is a tragedy, the cause of tragedy is the lack of temperance' which is latent in the character of Eve since the pre-fallen stage. Eve behaves truly according to the native concept and not cultivated notion of Milton about women and when Milton tries to make her appear at a higher rostrum she acts in undesirable manner and her frailties flash to the embarrassment of all. It must be deemed as a part of her nature to be dissuaded by any other Adam in the

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[16] P.L. IX, ll. 1072-73.

Eden. Here is a confrontation between loyalty and temptation; loyalty to her admired and adored Adam on the one side and temptation for acquiring superiority over Adam on the other side. She, who is conceived to deem God in Adam, now aspires to rise above him by disobeying the holy command. It is not only a breach of pledge, but an act of sacrilege also. Temptation is the primary cause of seduction. The spirit which permeates after the fall is full of jealousy, torments and way-wardness. The proposal of Eve that Adam must die with her for she is in love with him lowers her in our estimation. Her fear that in her absence Adam may marry another Eve makes her position almost ridiculous. Herself she is perished and proposes that Adam must also perish with her. If this is proposed by Adam himself she may be saved from the ridicule. Apparently Eve is concerned with the fulfulment of her own desire only. Paradise is lost to her and Adam must also lose it. This is one of the vices of her nature grown probably immediately after the fall. Since Milton failed to make her play the elevated role before the fall he lets her fall to play the vicarious role of women in natural way according to his own native concept. Before I proceed to examine this role of Eve an observation on the character of Seeta in 'Ramcaritmanas' is necessary for a

comparative assessment of these poets' attitude towards women.

Tulasi Das remains consistent about Seeta. To him Seeta's role in the life of Rama is ever chaste, sacred and dutiful. By her acts, words and thoughts she holds herself ever high in our estimation. Tulasi Das handles the character of Seeta in the midst of crowd, in sufferings and under changing places and times but she remains ever constant in her thoughts towards Rama. When advised by Rama to stay home and benefit from the company of father, mother, friends and family in the midst of comforts she says:

> O Lord of Life! O Lord of grace!
> O Moon for the lily of Raghu race!
> Even Heaven shall be a Hell
> Without you for me to dwell.[17]

Seeta is totally devoted to Rama and can imagine no happiness in separation from him. Her attachment is unquestionable, her loyalty inalineable and she can have no life but for him. In a similar situation we have noticed how Eve has behaved. She aspires to rise above Adam as his superior in order to gain independence.

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[17] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 64d.

This thought of self-exultation to acquire a position not only equal but superior also to Adam is not in the character of Seeta's way of thinking. Such ideas are totally alien to Seeta's mind. She acts and behaves within her esteemed bounds and is indeed admirable for that. Her concern and love for Rama transcends all barriers. Tulasi Das makes Seeta continuously conform to the traditional ideals of Hindu society. Seeta's devotion for Rama is infinite and sacred. She is perfect, pious and unchangeable, she considers austere and complete love for husband as the highest good for a woman. This is how Tulasi Das presents Seeta in 'Ramcaritmanas'. A reference to the instruction given by Maina to Parvati testifies these observations:

> Worship ever the feet of Shiva
> Duty of a wife it is, husband alone is her God.[18]

The same is repeated by Anusuya:

> O Princess! listen, there is limit to the good
> Which mother, father, brothers and well-wishers do
> But O Janaki! husband bestows infinite gift
> And base is the woman who serves not him.
> . . . .
> Be he old and sick, poor and stupid

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[18] Ramcaritmanas, B.K.11., 101d, 5-6.

Blind and deaf, wretched and choleric
Yet the wife who dishonours husband
Shall be awarded after death countless torments
One duty, one vow and one principle for a wife there is
To love with body,mind and words husband's lotus feet.[19]

This is a solemn pledge of wife to husband and Seeta by all means sticks to this pledge and acts accordingly in relation to Rama. Eve dishonours her pledge and eats the fruit, and then conceives of her own exalted position aspiring for superiority over Adam. This kind of conduct is detrimental to the wife's relation with husband. Seeta mediates more deeply on Rama when she is away from him. Eve becomes callous in absence of Adam and is seduced. Adam suggests to Eve:

The wife where danger or dishonour lurks
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.[20]

To this Eve replies:

His fraud is then thy fear which plain infers
Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shak'n or seduced.[21]

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[19] Ramcaritmanas, Ar.K., ll. 4d, 9-20.

[20] P.L., IX, ll. 267-69.

[21] Ibid., ll. 285-287.

The thought that she may be seduced or become infirm is already existent in her mind. Only an occasion is needed for it. Compared to this Seeta abhors the idea of separation from Rama. When she is separated and taken far off into another island by Ravan her thoughts become more deeply concentrated on Rama. She finds no occasion for temptations. No amount of fear can change her mind. Ravan offers to make her the Empress of Lanka, even his queen to become her maid-servant if Seeta can simply glance at him but once. Seeta's words not only rebuff Ravan but insult him also:

> Vaidehi remembered her dearest Lord of Ayodhya
> And spoke having covered her face with blades of grass
> Listen, O ten-headed Ravan!
> At the gleam of glow-worm can lilies bloom?
> ....Keep this at your heart.
> O villain! are you aware of the arrows of the Lord?
> O rogue! you kidnapped me when I was alone
> No shame you have, for you are vile and shameless.[22]

Eve is a weak character to whom Milton assigned a heavy role. She indeed staggers and fails to attain the expected height. Seeta is potentially a strong character who steers her way magnificiently till the end with worthiness ever more than any occasion demands.

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[22] <u>Ramcaritmanas</u>, S.K., ll. 8d, 7-14.

I V

I have so long dwelt upon Eve and Seeta only for a comparative study and evaluation of the attitudes of Milton and Tulasi Das towards women. This has given us a fair understanding of the subject. But a detailed examination of other female characters is necessary for a comprehensive and total understanding of their views about women. Milton's view of women in general may be discussed with reference to his doctrine of marriage and divorce. Milton wrote in 1645:

> He who wilfully abstains from marriage not being supernaturally gifted is in diabolical sin.[23]

This brings in his idea of inevitable union of almost every man with a woman. The union is purposed by the feelings and hopes of a happy and fruitful life for variety of reasons. It has, therefore, to be conditioned with consideration of the purpose. The belief that 'men have a property in their wives' is unjust and injurious to the purpose. Milton had reflected a good deal about marriage even before his marriage. He held that marriage should be a union of two minds, that mutual solace and delight was as important an object of

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[23] Christopher Hill: Milton and the English Revolution, Faber and Faber, London, 1974, p.122.

marriage as the procreation of children. The desirability of divorce where a couple proved mutually incompatible was the natural corollary of the new emphasis on marriage as a voluntary union of like-minded people. In the face of conservative attitude of the Anglican Church the opinion of Milton was dangerously radical. However, some softening in the attitude was gradually becoming noticeable. Judicial separation was accepted sometimes for reasons other than adultery, but not divorce permitting remarriage. Growing contact with the world civilization brought home knowledge about many other countries where monogamy was not the rule. Already in 1596 some agitation was going on to take out the matrimonial cases from the jurisdiction of the church courts and transfer them to the common law courts. This was in conformity with the concept of Milton in ceasing to regard marriage as a sacrament and treating it as a civil contract.

The Catholic Church held marriage as a sacrament and indissoluble. The first Christian pronouncement on marriage after Christ is St. Paul's "It is better to marry than to burn". The Roman Catholic doctrine of marriage starts from the seventh chapter of Epistle to the Corinthians:

> As pastors should propose to themselves the happy and perfect lives of the Christian people, their most earnest wish must be that of the Apostle, when writing to the Corinthions in these words: I would that you were all even as myself ..... that is that all would observe the virtue of continence; for the faithful can find no greater happiness in this life than that the soul, distracted by no worldly care, and every unruly desire of the flesh being tranquilized and extinguished, repose in the sole study of piety, and the contemplation of heavenly things. But since, as the same Apostle testifies, every one hath his proper gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that ..... and marriage is adorned with great and divine blessings so as truly and properly to be numbered among the sacraments of the Catholic Church etc.[24]

Milton was seriously opposed to the prohibition of divorce on any other ground than adultery as declared by the Church. He was against 'enslaving the dignity of man by setting straiter limits to obedience than God had set.' He considered it a cruel law binding man to 'a wife's constant contrariness, faithlessness and disobedience'. To him marriage was a union of minds, not merely of bodies, and he wanted it to be freely entered into and freely dissoluble. Marriage which made life tedious could with 'gentle stroke' be dissolved. Man could procure divorce for the release from bondage. In Samson's words the intensity of such cause is obvious but the 'stroke' with which it is obtained is violent:

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[24] H.J.C. Grierson: Milton & Wordsworth, Chatto & Windus London, 1963. p.184.

Out, out 'Hyaena' these are thy wonted arts
And arts of every woman false like thee
To break all faith all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech
And reconcilement move with feign'd remorse
Confess and promise wonders in her change
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her virtue on weakness which way to assail
. . . .
That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd
. . . .
Are drawn to wear out miserable days
Entangl'd with a poisonous bosom snake.[25]

While Milton was of the opinion that women were much more likely to have the 'incurable temperamental defects' which render marriage null, he was not against divorce of husbands by women on grounds of adultery or heresy. The right of divorce 'can not belong to any civil or earthly power against the will and consent of both parties, or of the husband alone'. The right of divorce by women is echoed in the words of Dalila:

Why do I humble thus myself and suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?[26]

In Tulasi Das theme of divorce is never a topic of serious

[25]John Milton: Samson Agonistes, ll. 748-63.

[26]Ibid., ll. 965-66.

concern. In 'Ramcaritmanas' references to such incidents are rare but not absent. In fact the poignancy of Milton's temperament on this theme provoked largely by Mary Ppwell episode of his life is lacking in Tulasi Das. A poet of tranquillity and devotion Tulasi Das approaches to the theme in allusive manner. Gods and sages are not exceptions to these allusions. Lord Shiva by a 'gentle stroke' gets himself separated from Sati on account of her questionable conduct:

> Then to Rama's feet Shiva bowed his head
> And as he remembered Rama this thought came
> With this body of Sati I can not unite
> Thus Lord Shiva made up his mind.[27]

Again there is allusion to the episode of Ahilya who was once turned into stone for her misconduct. Her husband had cursed her on the ground of adultery. Tulasi Das has only referred to it without attaching much significance. Perhaps he deemed such punishment as a foregone conclusion. But he takes pity also and wishes to make amends:

> The wife of Gautam had been cursed
> She is lying patiently into stone being turned.
> Bestow upon her your grace O Raghubir!
> For she needs the dust of your lotus feet.[28]

[27] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 56d, 1-4.
[28] Ibid., B.K., ll. 209d, 25-28.

Besides these cases of divorce referred to in 'Ramcaritmanas' there are references to both polygamy and monogamy. King Dasrath is referred to having three wives, each enjoying equal status of queen. The existence of three wives in the family leads us to believe that there could be even more wives than three for a man. That was socially accepted practice and Tulasi Das never questions the merit of it. But at the end of his epic he describes the ideal life of the people of Ayodhya under the regime of Rama and refers to monogamy as the ideal form of marriage:

> To have but one wife was a solemn pledge
> And with mind, words, and deeds she served
> her husband well.[29]

The subject of divorce, bigamy and polygamy in Tulasi Das is treated unilaterally. It seems wife has nothing to say but passively accept the will of her husband even when he divorces her. Unlike Milton, in Tulasi Das women do not act like Dalila. The right of divorce exclusively belongs to men. That a wife would divorce her husband was unimaginable in the contemporary society of Tulasi Das. But divorce of wife by husbands was an accepted practice and it involved

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[29] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., ll. 21d, 15-16.

no shocking experience for any one. Marriage was considered to be a sacrament and though the wives were divorced their non-physical link with the husbands did not end. The concept of re-union with husband in the next life was also honoured by the society. Narad explains to the parents of Parvati in "Ramcaritmanas":

> Listen, O Maina! to my truthful words
> Your daughter is Bhawani, mother of universe
> . . . .
> And even as Shiva's half-self in him she lives.[30]

And again:

> Know you this and give up your doubts
> Parvati is Shiva's eternal spouse.

The earlier bond of marriage between Sati and Shiva persists and in the next life Sati performs penance to get Shiva as husband. Parvati speaks:

> I have dedicated this life for Shambhu
> And who cares for vices and virtues?
> . . . .
> In ten millions of lives firm I shall remain
> To marry Shiva or remain maiden.
> From the advice of Narad I shall not depart,
> Although a hundred times Shiva himself may ask.[31]

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[30] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 97d, 3-5.

[31] Ibid., ll. 210d, 33.

In respect of Ahilya, the cursed wife of Gautam, also Tulasi Das shows sympathy. After Rama's lotus feet have touched the stone Ahilya gets back her life:

> To her husband's realm she went with bliss.[32]

V

Besides what has been said above some general observation may be made on the attitude of Milton and Tulasi Das towards women in respect of their characters and qualities. This may draw very near to a controversial point of confrontation between man and woman. It may be presumed that both Milton and Tulasi Das were male poets and their masculine ego is frequently revealed in their works. Milton in his life and later was charged with making scurrilous remarks against women. Some people are of the opinion that "the vulgar agreed with Milton". This in particular, refers to his attitude towards women. He is, according to some, cruel to women, a libertine and an advocate of sexual promiscuity. Tulasi Das, despite his admired stature in Hindi literature, is also generally attacked for holding undesirable views

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[32] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., l. 210 Chh., 16.

about women. John Milton has a limited number of women to characterise : Eve, Dalila and Lady Comus. But they are adequate for an evaluation of his attitude towards women. Eve is the mother of mankind, Dalila a patriot but treacherous wife and Lady in Comus a virgin of unimpaired chastity. Much has already been said about Eve. Milton in his general opinion takes Eve to perform the duties of a house-wife in a typical Indian way when he says:

> For nothing lovelier can be found
> In woman, than to study household good
> And good works in her husband to promote.[33]

In "Ramcaritmanas" Tulasi Das has referred to the household duties of wives in a different context. Even the menial work in the house is volumtarily accepted by the wife with honour:

> O Lord of Tulasi! consider her as your attendant
> And bestow your love upon her etc.[34]
> Though in the palace servants there were, male and female,
> Countless and skilled in service of various ways;
> Yet with her hands the household she did,
> And acted according to Rama's wish.
> The way the merciful Lord was pleased

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[33]P.L., IX, ll. 232-35.

[34]Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll 335d, 20231(Chh).

Seeta knew and the same she did.
Kaushalya and other mothers-in-law in palace
She served well, no pride or vanity she had.[35]

The domesticity of wife is prescribed both in "Paradise Lost" and "Ramcaritmanas". But in the former it is to avoid the possibility of danger in the event of being exposed to outer world. The study of household good and promotion of good works in house are, of course, the fine aspect of women's domesticity. But since this is prescribed by the husband himself, a selfish motive seems appended thereto. In the "Ramcaritmanas" this is deemed to be an honoured duty of a woman, a quality which is valued most in a typical Hindu family. The involvement of Seeta in the domestic works enhances the happiness of the family of Rama and makes her deeply honoured and loved also.

Allusions and references to the blemishes of women in both the poets resemble to a large extent. In "Ramcaritmanas" there are various categories of women and Tulasi Das adopts attitude towards them in different manners according to their categories and character. He is a conformist and conforms to the customary social views about women. In the religious poetry of the age women have not been held in

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[35] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., ll. 23d, 9-16.

esteem. In fact women are despised and treated as obstructions in the path of devotion. Tulasi Das, strictly speaking, does not fall in this category of poets. But he has not been able to overcome the current prejudices of the society towards women. While he has, therefore, on occasions adored women like Seeta and Parvati, he has failed also to prevent himself from the occasional outbursts of sarcastic remarks against women in general. In the beginning of "Ramcaritmanas" Tulasi Das has prayed to Bhawani as he has prayed to other gods and goddesses. He considers her as the supreme mother of the universe. But when she grows curious to put on trial the reality of Rama she stoops low and does not trust Shiva. Tulasi Das has treated Bhawani as an inseparable and inalienable part of Shiva's life. Her supremacy is unquestionable in the company of Shiva because her entity is unimpaired. But when in the form of Sati voluntarily she separates herself and differs in mind her nature as a woman becomes questionable. Tulasi Das therefore says:

> Behold the effect of a woman's nature
> Sati wanted to hide herself even there.[36]

and

> With Lord Shiva I played a trick
> Women are by nature ignorant and foolish.[37]

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[36] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 52d, 9-10.

[37] Ibid., ll. 56d, 19-20.

Lord Shiva resolves to divorce Sati not on the ground of unchastity but for disbelieving in the ideals of Shiva. Shiva clearly states:

> Sati had assumed the form of Seeta
> So deeply distressed at heart was Shiva
> Now if I love Sati any more
> Wrong I shall do and devotion forgo,
> Sati is chaste and can not be divorced
> But a great sin it will be to love also.[38]

Separation of Sati is the result of her action to create a separate entity from Shiva in the realisation of truth about Rama and not of her misconduct. She feels and confesses it:

> Noble are the ways of love, behold
> The water also like milk is sold,
> But when the sour drops fall into it
> The two are separated and the taste is vanished.[39]

In a family of noble queens where Kaushalya and Sumitra are admired for their worthy role as mothers and wives Kaikeyee is despised for her selfish and unkind conduct. Her character and conduct become the source of grief for all. But these two are separate elements in her. Her character can not be identified with her conduct, Dasrath is shocked and swoons

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[38] Ramcaritmanas, B.K. 11. 55d, 13 etc.

[39] Ibid., B.K., 11. 57S.

at the cruel demands of Kaikeyee and condemns her by personifying the unreliability of female nature in her.

> The occasion wants one thing but the other happens
> I have trusted a woman and I am ruined.[40]

Kaikeyee's fault lies not in her nature but in her failure to identify herself with the thoughts of Dasrath. The love of Dasrath for Rama is founded on faith. Kaikeyee falls short of this faith. There is nothing wrong in her character. Dasrath also feels it:

> O darling! why you speak these undeserved words
> Having ruined all trust and love?[41]

Thus here also the attempt for creation of separate entity for Kaikeyee is the cause for her condemnation. Character is a normal feature of a person. It does not change. There may be temporary suspension of functioning of its qualities but it reasserts sooner or later and restores the functions too. Dasrath is only surprised at the conduct of Kaikeyee and does not readily believe:

> Still my heart is tortured under shock
> If it is a joke in wrath or truly you ask
> Abandon wrath and let me know Rama's fault

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[40] Ramcaritmanas, A.K., ll. 29d.

[41] Ibid., A.K., ll. 30d, 9-10.

Rama is noble every one remarks
You also loved him and praised
But now I doubt if you were honest.[42]

It is Rama alone who recognises the real nature of Kaikeyee. He is soft to her because he knows that her character is not abominable or unreliable. He receives and honours Kaikeyee first in the forest:

First of all Rama met Kaikeyee
And pleased her mind by love and simplicity.
He touched her feet and consolation gave
Having destiny, creator and time blamed.[43]

And again when Rama returns to Ayodhya:

The Lord knew Kaikeyee was ashamed
Hence O Uma! to her palace first he went.[44]

Tulasi Das holds the character of Kaikeyee in suspense and makes her "conduct" obviously the reason of grief for others. The conduct of Kaikeyee compels Dasrath to plunge into philosophical calculations of the qualities of a woman. He says:

Truly of woman's nature poets say
Inscrutible, measureless and obscure in all the ways,

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[42] Ramcaritmanas, A.K., ll. 31d, 9-14.

[43] Ibid., A.K., ll. 243d, 13-17.

[44] Ibid., U.K., ll. 9d, 1-2.

One may catch one's reflection, O brother!
But none can comprehend a woman's nature.[45]

And again:

Nothing there is which the fire can not burn
Nothing there is which the sea cannot absorb
There is nothing which the time devours not
And there is nothing which a woman can not perform.[46]

Despite everything that can be said about Tulasi Das on the basis of these lines the poet has no intention to be sarcastic about women. His main object has been to make use of the contemporary notions of the age about women for his poetical purposes. Kaikeyee's conduct and Dasrath's grief under the situation demand it. Bharat for whose sake Kaikeyee has endangered her position also speaks:

How could the king believe what you said
Destiny deprived him of his reason at the time
Even Brahma knows not the feelings of women's heart
Which is mine of all vices, sins and frauds.[47]

Kaikeyee is thereafter shocked and speaks not a word in self-defence. She grievously contemplates, and confronted

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[45] Ramcaritmanas, A.K., ll. 46d, 13-16.

[46] Ibid., A.K., ll. 47d.

[47] Ibid., A.K., ll. 161d, 5-8.

with disapproval and condemnation, she grows passively penitent. This is obvious from her continued silence in the rest of the poem. Here is a complex situation and the views of Tulasi Das about Kaikeyee can not be correctly assessed from her conduct on matters where certain principles are involved. She behaves as a mother and places her son's interest above all considerations. This is quite natural, but others fail to understand it. Tulasi Das has subjected her to general contempt lest the general sentiments may be injured. But he makes amends later by giving her, of all the ladies, the first privilege to be received by Rama.

The humiliation of Supnakha by Rama is another point of criticism against Tulasi Das. This is considered as an anti-chivalrous attitude of the poet. Tulasi Das has been again misunderstood here. The episode is intended to fulfil two purposes. The act of mutilating the face of Supnakha is necessary to save the honour of women. The conduct of Supnakha is derogatory to the woman-kind and no woman would expose her valued and admired self to an unwilling male counterpart. The punishment of Supnakha is in the just cause of women. Lust in a woman deprives her of all charm and Supnakha is terribly lusty. The poet believes that honour and lust do not go together. Tulasi Das says:

If a servant deserves happiness, a beggar respect
An addict wealth and lusty holy prospect
Greedy desires fame and arrogant four goals to atain
They are milking the sky for milk then.[48]

Supnakha by being vulgar lowers the womankind to a level of intolerable ridicule and Tulasi Das is of the view that the prestige of women is at stake. The second purpose is one of poetic necessity. By depriving Supnakha of her ears and nose a ground for provocating challenge is prepared. This is done more perhaps to insult Ravan than to punish Supnakha herself. Supnakha appears for a short while only and after the purpose of the poet is fulfilled she is dismissed. Whatever occurs between Rama and Supnakha is not intended to identify and evaluate the total attitude of the poet towards women.

The observations made by Rama in Aranya-Kand of "Ramcaritmanas" are further the cause of criticism. In his discourse to Narad Rama says:

Desire, anger, avarice, pride and passions
Are the powerful forces of infatuation
And of all these the women is terrible indeed,
Illusion incarnate and source of grief.[49]

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[48] Ramcaritmanas, Ar. K., ll. 16d, 29-32.

[49] Ibid., 43d.

O sage! listen, it is said
By Vedas, Puranas and sages;
Woman is spring
For the forest of illusion
Perseverence, penance, austerities are water
Which a woman makes dry like summer.
Like frogs are lust, wrath, envy and pride
Whom woman like rain gives delight.[50]

These are obviously pungeant remarks and taken out of contexts misrepresent the poet's opinion about women. Narad is an ascetic. His ways are different from those of other human beings. There are certain things treated as obstructions in the path of devotion. "Ramcaritmanas" which is basically intended to deal with a theme of austere devotion can not be accused of committing any impropriety on such grounds of human frailty. The nature of man is tempted by the physical charm of woman and the glamour of wealth. Hence the possibility of deviation from the path of devotion endangers the pursuits of ascetics. The weakness of man prevents him from discovering anything other than obvious complexion and form in woman. This is an amorous attitude and abominable in the opinion of the poet. Man, in general, therefore must be the victim of the vices that follow from

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[50] _Ramcaritmanas_, Ar. K., ll. 43d, 1-8.

such attitude towards women. Narad is in the same position. Rama explains to him:

> A youthful woman is the fountain of evil
> Giver of torments and source of grief,
> Having considered this at heart
> O sage! I allowed you not.[51]

The critical opinion against Tulasi Das here is of vicarious nature. He is indeed more critical about the man's weakness than the vices of woman's nature. Milton is more explicit on this point when he says:

> Of what now I suffer
> She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
> Who vanquished with a peal of words
> O Weakness!
> Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.[52]

Tulasi Das while concluding the discourse to Narad says:

> Like the flame of a lamp a young woman is
> O mind! a moth for that you must not be.
> Worship Rama having abandoned lust and pride
> And ever keep the company of the upright.[53]

Paths of devotion and infatuation are contrary to and destructive of each other. Hence the devotees are warned against

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[51] Ramcaritmanas, Ar. K., ll. 44d.

[52] John Milton: Samson Agonistes, ll. 233-37.

[53] Ramcaritmanas, Ar. K., ll. 46d.

their own temptation for what is merely obvious in woman. The above lines prescribe the preventive measures.

On several other occasions Tulasi Das makes remarks on women to illustrate his views on the ethics of human life. But men are not spared on such occasions. Rama's grief at the loss of Seeta provokes him to say that young women are not safe even if they are kept at heart. He finds analogy in kings and scriptures. But Rama has no ill-will against women. The whole epic is an evidence to it. A little later he speaks to Sugreeva:

> Foolish servants, cruel kings
> Unchaste wife and faithless friends
> Are the painful four like a trident.[54]

This is said to describe the dangers from bad women and not to condemn women. The misunderstanding is removed when he speaks to Bali:

> O fool! you are full of pride
> You paid no heed to the advice of wife.[55]

On the other occasions in "Ramcaritmanas" Tulasi Das refers to the character of women which is deemed to be a violent

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[54] Ramcaritmanas, K.K., ll. 6d, 17-19.

[55] Ibid., K.K., ll. 8d, 17-18.

attack on them. The following are of particular interest:

> Boundary of fields breaks due to heavy rains
> As women are spoiled when independent.[56]
>
> Drums, rustics, shudras, beasts and women
> Deserve by nature to be threatened.[57]
>
> Truly it is said about woman's nature
> Eight vices dwell at her heart ever
> Adventure, lies, fickleness, deceit and timidity
> Frailty, impurity and cruelty.[58]

They are used by the misogymists as the prescribed popular sayings against the women. Critics use them to support their mistaken notion that Tulasi Das hated women.

If we consider the analogy of uncontrolled water of the field with the nature of women we shall not take much time to understand that Tulasi Das never acted against women's interest. His opinion was that unrestricted freedom of women would be harmful, as excess of water, in stead of doing good, does harm only. Freedom can be meaningful within a respectable limit only. The remarks does not cast aspersion on the character of women and has emphasized on the

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[56] Ramcaritmanas, K.K., ll. 14d, 13-14.

[57] Ibid., S.K., ll. 15d, 11-12.

[58] Ibid., L.K., ll. 15d, 3-6.

possibility of misuse of unrestricted liberty. Milton is of the same opinion when he speaks about liberty:

> Licence they mean when they cry liberty
> For who loves that must first be wise and good.[59]

Tulasi Das says:

> Sorry for the woman who her husband deceives
> Is crafty, quarrelsome and of vagaband will.[60]

As regards the identification of women with drums, rustics, shudras and beasts it may be observed that the poet lets it come through the voice of the sea, who having been made humble, categorizes himself with drums, rustics, shudras and beasts and takes women with them also because women among the rustics and shudras were ill-treated. The expression is to indicate a condition of humility and adoration with which the sea speaks and for this he makes use of common--place notion of the age about women. The position of women in the contemporary society was not held in esteem. Tulasi Das tried to elevate the position and restore the respect due to them. The remarks of Ravan about the eight vices of women is in conformity with the common notion of the

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[59] John Milton: Sonnet XII.

[60] Ramcaritmanas, A.K., ll. 171d, 13-14.

society. But Tulasi Das on his part values the qualities of Mandodori and supports her wise attitude towards Rama. If the character of Mandodari is examined it will be clear that none of the eight qualities will fit in her character. Obviously Mandodari is fearless, kind, true, pure and conscientious. She tries to drive home to Ravan right-thoughts persistently. When Ravan does not change despite her persuasions she regrets deeply and Tulasi Das says:

> Mandodarī then believed at heart,
> "Fated to death my husband's wisdom is lost."[61]

It is therefore apparent that Tulasi Das held the women in high esteem. His views about women can be determined by over-all treatment and not by the scanty references which are ostensibly contrary to his real attitude. The women are treated as goddesses and as next to the Almighty only. It may be partly correct to say that if even he lapsed in disrespectable comments it was on account of gravitation to customary social ideas of the time. If Shiva is the father, Parvati is the mother, If Rama is Vishnu, Seeta is Lakshmi. These revered positions of women in "Ramcaritmanas" put an end to our doubts and misunderstanding about the attitude of the poet.

[61] Ramcaritmanas, L.K., ll. 15d, 15-16.

Milton wrote on various topics in prose and in support of his views on church and monarchy he spent more time than on topics concerning women. "On the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce" is an elaborate discussion in prose on marriage, divorce and polygamy. But this is the only major work on the topic concerning women. The poetical works of Milton provide abundant materials on the topic. In "Paradise Lost" Eve refers to the absolute superiority of men over women and says:

> Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head
> Command me absolutely not to go
> Going into such danger as thou saidst.[62]

Adam is rebuked for following Eve:

> Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey?[63]

In Samson Agonistes Dalila says:

> In argument with men a woman ever
> Goes by worse whatever be her cause.

And Chorus voices again:

> Therefore God's universal Law
> Gave to the man despotic power
> On his female in due awe.

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[62] P.L., IX, ll. 1155-57.

[63] P.L., X, ll. 145.

C.S. Lewis has quoted Aristotle to illustrate this concept of superiority of male over female in John Milton. Aristotle tells us that to rule and to be ruled are things according to Nature. The soul is the natural ruler of the body, the male of the female, reason of passion.

Under certain conditions Milton's woman serves the same purpose as the women of Tulasi Das. Tulasi Das has referred to the body of a young woman as the flame of a lamp and has warned man not to become a moth. In Samson Agonistes the same idea is put in other words:

> Out, Out "Hyaena" these are they wanted arts
> And arts of every woman false like thee.[64]

The notion of a crafty woman causing untold miseries to husband is described in Samson Agonistes and Samson indeed groans under penitence for marrying Dalila. I have already referred to the lines of 'Ramcaritmanas' which contain the same view in different contexts. Tulasi Das speaks again:

> That woman deserves remorse who her husband deceives
> Is crafty, coquettish and of vagaband will.[65]

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[64]John Milton: Samson Agonistes, ll. 748-49.

[65]Ramcaritmanas, A.K., ll. 171d, 13-14.

Ravan in "Ramcaritmanas" states eight vices of female nature. In 'Samson Agonistes' we come across a statement of Dalila which contains similar views about woman:

> First Granting, as I do, it was a weakness
> In me, but incident to all our sex,
> Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
> Of secrets.[66]

To these, cruelty, faithlessness, fear and audacity are added in other contexts in the same poem.

Eve's character, after she has eaten the fruit, represents the state of a fallen woman of noble and high birth. Dalila represents a tough and incompatible wife. Lady of the "Comus" represents the state of a virgin woman of purest and simplest qualities. Her virtue is her strength:

> My sister is not so defenceless left
> As you imagine, she has a hidden strength.[67]

And again:

> But a hidden strength
> Which if Heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own:
> 'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:

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[66] John Milton: Samson Agonistes, 773-76.

[67] John Milton: Comus, ll. 414-15.

She that has that, is clad in complete steel,
And like a quiver'd Nymph with Arrows keen
May huge forests and unharbour'd Heaths
Infamous Hills, and sandy perilous wilds
Where through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, Bandit
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.[68]

In "Ramcaritmanas" the quality of chastity is considered as the most precious quality of a woman. It is a powerful weapon in the possession of women by which they can defend themselves.Tulasi Das says:

The wife of that demon was extremely chaste
So he could not be defeated by Mahesh.[69]

To conclude I may mention that both Milton and Tulasi Das have treated women in various ways. Sometimes they rise above all expectations and sometimes fall down to an unimaginable depth. They are both terrible and admirable, cruel and sometimes divine. I have abundantly quoted from the texts to evaluate their views. Before I end I should point out to one more important aspect of the women in these poets. The women serve the purpose of motivating the lives of men. In 'Ramcaritmanas' Sati, Parvati, Seeta,

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[68] John Milton: Comus, 11, 418-27.

[69] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11. 122d, 13-14.

Kaikeyee and even Supnakha activate the lives of Shiva, Rama, Dasrath and Ravana respectively. Milton also treats the women in the same way. Eve motivates Adam; Dalila motivates Samson and Lady Comus all the good beings. Milton holds the view that behind the ruin of every great man there is a woman. But he believes also that the women are capable of doing untold good if they rightly make use of their native grace and charm having overcome their frailties. Milton in fact, values the qualities of female sex but he is disappointed to discover that they are contradicted by the vices of their nature.

This was the spirit of reformation, to discover the virtues and try to expose the vices to ridicule. That was the Miltonic way of doing things. Tulasi Das also had almost similar approach to the problem. He exposed in 'Ramcaritmanas' the perverted attitude of women of the contemporary Hindu society.

> Husbands of others the wretched women love
> Their handsome and wirtuous husbands having given up
> The wedded women are unadorned
> But the widows beautify with ever new shows.[70]

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[70] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., ll. 98d, 77-80.

In order that the blame may not be the share of women only Tulasi Das says:

> Noble born and faithful wives the men turn out
> And maid-servants they bring in to make spouse.[71]

We can not call Tulasi Das either pro-male or anti-female. He wanted only to establish their rightful place in the society in order to bring about a harmonious social relation.

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[71] Ramcaritmanas, U.K., ll. 100d, 79-80.

CHAPTER - V

RAVAN AND SATAN - THE TWO ANTAGONISTS

Ravan, the demon king of Lanka, is the archy-enemy of Rama, the incarnate prince of Ayodhya. He occupies a very important position and is treated as a worthy antagonist of Rama. 'Ramcaritmanas' primarily deals with the struggle between Rama and Ravana. The poet makes use of this struggle to provide an opportunity for Rama to declare his victory over Ravan. In 'Paradise Lost' Milton introduces Satan in a more or less similar way. He runs parallel to Ravana in many respects moving earth and heaven against God, the Father, in the same way as Ravana directs all his forces against Rama. Milton also plans and ultimately declares the victory of God, the Father, over Satan. There are events in both the epics, more or less identical in description of these two major characters. In this Chapter I shall examine the characters of Ravana and Satan to reveal the marks of contrast and similarities.

The 'Ramcaritmanas' does not allow Ravana to appear in the beginning with any sudden impact on the readers. Tulasi Das describes merely the cause of his birth and his

geneological reference to show that Ravana is not an abrupt creation. His origin is linked up with a tradition and his birth is pre-determined. The poet traces his origin and relates it to his earlier births in different forms together with his equally mighty brothers Kumbhkarna. The birth of Ravana is thus not an isolated incident. It is connected with the happenings of the past:

> Two gate-keepers there were of Hari
> Jay and Vijay whom every one knew.
> Both of them under the curse of a Brahmin
> Sensual bodies of demons received.
> Hiranyakaship and Hiranyaksha were their names,
> They quelled the pride of Indra and earned a fame.
> Victorious in battles they were, renowned heroes
> The Lord killed the one, himself being a boar.
> Nar-singh He became and the other he killed
> He proclaimed the glory of Prahlad, his devotee.
> Again as demons they were born
> In the forms of Ravan and Kumbh-Karna.
> They were warriors mighty and bold
> The conqueror of gods the world knows.[1]

There is a reference to another event also:

> In another Kalpa when the Gods were in distress
> In a battle by Jallandhar having been defeated,

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[1] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 121d, 7-20.

Shambhu fought fiercely with him
But the demon was mighty and died not of killing.
The wife of the demon was very chaste
Tripurari could not conquer for that sake.
Then the Lord seduced her by a trick
And the work of gods thus He did.
When she knew the secret of it
She became very angry and cursed Hari,
The Curse was confirmed by Lord Hari
For the gracious God is the treasure of splendid deeds.
In the form of Ravan that Jallandhar was born
Whom Rama killed Supreme salvation to grant.[2]

There is third reference where the two followers of Shiva are cursed by Narada:

The attendants of Shiva saw the sage going his way
Freed from illusion at heart very gay
With great fear to Narad they went
They clapped his feet and meekly said;
'O high Sage! we are not Brahmins,but attendants of Shiva.
Great offence we did and the fruits we have got'.
O benevolent Lord! dismiss our curse,
Then spoke merciful Narad:
'Go, and be born both of you as demons
And achieve glory; valour and fame.
When the whole universe by your arms you win
In human form Vishnu shall reveal.

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[2] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11, 122d, 9-18 etc.

You shall die in battle at the hands of Hari
And from birth and death be released.
Having bowed their heads to the feet of the sage
Both of them went away
When the time came they were born
In terms of the curse as mighty demons.[3]

The fourth reference is to another event resulting in the birth of Ravana: This is the story of Bhanu Pratap.

O sage! listen, the same king when the time had come
Was born with Kiths and kins as demon.
He had ten heads and twenty arms.
With Ravana as his name a mighty warrior he was.
His younger brother named Arimardan
Was born as valiant Kumbhkarna.
His minister named Dharmruchi,
Was born as his step-brother, youngest was he.
His name was Vibhisan, to the world well-known
A devotee of Vishnu and fountain of wisdom.
The sons and servants of the king
Were born as demons, many and terrible.[4]

Tulasi Das doesnot alter the concept of Ravana as envisaged by the time-honoured tradition. He is the same ten-headed demon as found, in one form or the other, elsewhere. This is true not of origin only but of his qualities and acts

[3] Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 138d, 1-18.

[4] Ibid., B.K., ll. 175d, 1-12.

also. 'Ramcaritmanas' introduces no new Ravana or altered Ravana either geneologically or independently. But the one thing which Tulasi Das unfailingly and consistently emphasized in 'Ramcaritmanas' is the devilish propensity of Ravana's nature even though there are indications of some good and rare qualities in him. This may be considered his personal contributions to the ancient story.

I I

When we come to Milton to examine how he conceived of Satan, there appear enormous sources which seem to have influenced the thoughts of Milton. Milton conceived of Satan as an embodiment of all anti-God motiveless malignity. Milton endeavoured strenuously to fashion Satan with massive vigour. It seems that more than half of the energies of his talent was consumed in the creation of Satan in 'Paradise Lost'. It is Satan who gives a spectacular start to the epic; it is Satan who keeps the theme of Paradise Lost alive, and it is he who by his sufferings and qualities of total and infinite rebellion against the divine creates and maintains the tension all through in the mind of the readers.

God, the Father, and his son, though considered and declared supreme, play dim role only from the literary point of view. What is the source of Milton's Satan, and how Satan appears in his various aspects in Paradise Lost will be the subject-matter of my discussion in the following lines.

The historical aspect of Satan is traceable to the concept of adversary in the Old Testament. In the Book of John the adversary comes to the heavenly court with the "songs of God". His task is to roam through the earth and report to the King the acts and persons adversely. This function is the opposite of that of the "eyes of the Lord" which roam through the earth strengthening all that is good. In the New Testament Satan is identified as the prince of evils, the inveterate enemy of God and of Christ, with his throne among men. He takes the guise of an angel of light. He can enter a man and act through him. A man, therefore, can be called Satan because of his acts or attitude.[5] By his subordinate demons Satan can take possession of men's bodies, afflicting them or making them diseased.[6] To him sinners are delivered for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved. After the preaching of the seventy

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[5] Encyclopaedia Britanica ed. 1973, Vol. 19, pp.1080-81.

[6] Ibid.,

disciples during which devils were subjected to them, Jesus saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.[7] The Book of Revelation tells that when the risen Christ returns from heaven to reign on earth, Satan will be bound with a great chain for a thousand years, then be released, but almost immediately face final defeat and be cast into external punishment. He is identified with serpent and also with devil, The term 'diabolis', devil, occurs more frequently than Satan in the New Testament. In 'Koran' the term 'Shaitan' is used for Satan (devil). In the Old Testament, however, there is no suggestion of any dualism. God forms light and creates darkness, makes weal and creates woes. The evil spirit that terrifies men and leads them to murderous action is from the Lord. Any philosophy of evil must find room for evil within the concept of God and within his purpose: his sun and rain, poured out on the good and the evil, make both weeds and wheat grow. In later Judaism, under Persian influence, a form of dualism developed. The devil and all his hosts were thought of as fallen angles who, like the heathen powers hostile to God, had lapsed through pride and envy into sin and abused their power as God's deputies. Persian dualism conceived of the conflict

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[7] Encyclopaedia Britanica ed. 1973, Vol. 19, pp.1080-81.

of good and evil as existent from the beginning outside man, who could take sides and assist one or the other. Later Jewish dualism thought man himself and all nature and creation were affected by sin and the fall of man and needed a new creation to remove the taint of evil. This was to be achieved not, as in the Old Testament, by a new heart and spirit in man but by a dramatic divine intervention to overthrow Satan, whether in human form as the Anti-Christ or the beast or false prophet, or as supernatural being. The Biblical ideas, mediated through the speculation of Post-biblical Judaism, were transmitted to the theology of early Christian writers, in which the figure of Satan played a large part in the discussion of the nature of evil, the meaning of salvation and the purpose and efficacy of atoning work of Christ. Early and medieval church writers discussed at length problems raised by belief in the existence of a spiritual being such as Satan in a universe created and sustained by an all-powerful, all-wise and all-loving God. Under the influence of the 18th century revolt against belief in the supernatural, liberal Christian theology tends to treat the biblical language about Satan as 'picture thinking' not to be taken literally - as a mythological attempt to express the reality and extent of evil in the

universe, existing outside and apart from man but profoundly influencing the human sphere.

Since Satan is a personified evil in the form of a devil with miraculous power to transform himself into various spheres and sounds, it becomes not only difficult, but indeed impossible, to contain the full Christian understanding within a simple sphere. Theologically Milton believes, as is inserted in Genesis also, that sin is not a created entity, but a perversion of created good. Everything created was declared by the Creator to be good. The evil, therefore, remains an essentially mysterious distortion and perversion. Satan has indulged in this kind of perversion in 'Paradise Lost' by seeking to exalt himself in power to equality with God. He has debased himself and destroyed any possibility of fulfilment within his created potential. Men have always, as Satan did, been tempted to exalt their own will above the will of God and to love themselves more than they love God himself. As Satan embodies this temptation perennially, he must be viewed as singularly attractive to man. On the other hand, Satan is essentially a perversion and distortion of created good, and therefore should be understood as a distortion of created beauty. This tension in the Christian

understanding makes him hideous and destructive. But it perennially appeals to a man under appearances which are both attractive and tempting. Falsification is the heart of his being. He and his followers represent at once the source and the definition of sin. The belief in the original goodness of all created things and their subsequent perversion and distortion into evil and hideous forms presents a dilemma before us. All good things must be beautiful and all evil things hideous. The qualities of temptations may be related to both the forms. In order to tempt, the object must be attractive and it can be attractive if it is fascinating and beautiful, at least apparently. On the other hand the object which begets evil by temptation can not be attributed with beauty. The begetter of evils must therefore be hideous in appearance also. Maximilian Rudwin aptly wrote:

> 'Rationally conceived, the Devil should be by right the most fascinating object in creation. One of his essential functions, namely temptation, is destroyed by his hideousness. To be effective in the work of temptation, a devil might be expected to approach his intended victim in the most fascenating form he could command.'[8]

In the fourth century the devil was represented in delity to Genesis as a serpent coiled about the Tree of

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[8] Maximilion Rudwin: The Devil in Legend and Literature, Chicago, 1931, pp. 37-38.

knowledge. In the visual arts of the first Christian millennium, the attractive features of the demon were emphasised and the outward depravity minimised. An ivory carving of the 5th century shows Christ expelling demon, the demon represented by a little figure extruding from the head of the victim, with raised arms - but not much different in appearance from the victim himself.[9] A sixth century illuminated manuscript, treating a similar incident, shows what appears to be a winged figure rising above the head, entirely free and unlike what we are accustomed to regarding as a demon. In the Church at Baouit, Egypt, a sixth century fresco shows a devil with an angelic head. The ninth-century Bible of St. Gregory still shows a well-formed Satan, though with a clawed nails and a black halo. The ninth-century Utreeht psalter shows a personification of Hades chewing on sinners, an unattractive figure to be sure, but not so distorted in appearance as he was later to become. In the same manuscript, the devil trampled upon by Christ in Zimbo is still humanoid while some devils were shown with snaky hair or with horns.[10] In the eleventh century Anglo-Saxon manuscripts the fallen angels tend to be either nude or clothed

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[9] Ronald Mushat Frye: Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1978, pp.66-67.

[10] Ibid., p.67.

only in loin cloths, their hair is shaggy, while some may develop tails, claws in the place of nails, and take a dark even black colour, still most of the devils are humanoid in appearance, and not unattractive. The denigration of the appearance of Satan had barely begun. In "Allegories of the Virtues and Vices" by Katzenellenbogen the vices are cari-catured as weird powers of darkness. Their hair, in tufts and unkempt, and their garments, often consisting merely of a tattered loin-cloth, give an immediate impression of violence and wildness. That description could apply to some of the demons in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. By 1130 it had gone so far that the Vices were shown accompanied by a writhing dragon and represented as naked demons with flaming hair, who struggled in their last convulsions, as naked demons with claws on hands and feet. Their faces are often so distorted that they resemble often the masks of enraged beasts. Later, the devils are shown with such deformities as huge heads, gross eyes, distorted nostrils, emaciated limbs, talons, tails, horns, bat wings and instruments of torture. As the inspirer of all moral depravity and deformity, Satan is presented with an abundance of ugliness, his body distorted in every conceivable way and compounded of many different animal forms and his countenance filled with

scorn, lust and envy."[11]

This change, however, must not be mistaken to imply that there was any essential change in theology. The early Christians regarded the devil as no less degenerate morally than did their medieval descendants, while medieval men were just as aware of demonic attractiveness as were the early Christians. This marked change in the presentation of devil was due to many reasons. Firstly, the ancient Jewish and Christian opinion held that the demons were goat-like creatures. M.D. Anderson summarizes the influence of this conception:

> 'What we might call the basic devil was probably derived from the faun of classical mythology, for this creature, half goat, half human was associated by the early Christian with the devils, elves and the fallen angles who all inhabited the wild woods."[12]

British legends also contributed eminently to the hideous representation of the devils. One famous story tells how St. Guthlac was carried up into the air and down to Hell by horribly deformed beings which the author describes in great details. Again there is in British legend an account of a

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[11] Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, Ronald Mushat Frye, Princeton University Press New Jersey (1978), pp.67-68.

[12] Ibid., p.68.

vision which the Irish Knight Tundalus was said to have experienced in 1149, in which he saw at the entrance of Hell 'the enormous jaws of an animal with huge teeth between which flames shot forth and seized the condemned'. This notion of Hell is fixed in numerous pictures of the 11th and 12th centuries. The vision assumed a terrifying ferocity, but after Renaissance and Reformation the notion changed and such visions were considered as repulsive. Roland Mushat Frye says,

> "The distorted devils created in the Middle Ages showed a remarkable tenacity in the art of succeeding centuries. Typical of the 15th century in the north, Van Eyck's great 'diptych' at the Metropolitcan Musium in New York portrays 'hideous demons who merge with their victims, in a seething mass of tortured confusion', later in the fifteen century, Hirronymous Bosch created his straitingly depraved imps, giving new vitality to the old techniques by joining together hideously incommensurate forms and initiating a new sub-tradition which continued into Milton's own century. In the sixteenth century Michelangelo personified the forces of hell in a horrifying black face with screening mouth and bared teeth, and Raphael contrasted to the grace of his Michael the violent ugliness of the demon. In mid-sixteenth century, Bronzino pointed the devil still with a bat-like face, blood tipped horns and webbed hands ending in talons, which several decades later Ale andro Alloni presented female breasted demons with Medusa heads. The distortion continue to appear in the seventeenth century also."[13]

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[13]Milton's Imagery And The Visual Arts, Ronald Mushat Frye, Princeton University Press, New Jersey (1978), p.70.

How did Milton make use of the conventional notion of ugliness and distortions about demon with regard to Satan? To answer this question one must bear in mind that Milton's main purpose was to write an epic with enormous theological, philosophical, political and literary implications and not to depict merely visual sketches in the form of pictures. His poetic medium therefore, different from visual media, allowed him to achieve a synthesis inaccessible to an artist, while both his poetic and religious sophistication required that he do so. Though Satan is in no sense the hero of "Paradise Lost", whether heroism is defined in moral or epic terms, Milton chose to give his demonic prince a tremendously attractive aura; otherwise his epic would not have accorded with his own realistic understanding of human experience. The devils of 'Paradise Lost' could not be visualised in such a way as to appear simply repulsive. Similarly they could not be so presented as to appear ridiculous only. In the middle Ages the distorted fiend had become a kind of burlesque and demonic ugliness had reached a point of absurdity. The artists frequently made their demons so absurdly ugly that we can only laugh at them. According to other authors the devils became the clown of the medieval stage. Such conception made the valid

theological point that the demonic is ultimately ridiculous before the goodness of God and the faithfulness of his saints. The sustained atmosphere of mere burlesque would simply have destroyed the texture of an epic.[14]

These are the main reasons why Milton did not accept the traditional notion of demon. He dissociates his Satan from the distorted image, and he insists more upon internal than external deformity in his devils. It can, therefore, be said that whereas artists who gave Satan an angelic form were misguided, Milton succeeds only because he separately describes the movements of the mind, and therefore leaves himself at liberty to make the form heroic. The greatness of Milton's achievement in the demons consists largely in the combination of splendour and desolation which he accords them. The desolation is inward, while the splendor is outward and is not entirely lost until the final degradation of the demons in Book X, with their transformation into loathsome serpents. This kind of treatment of demons by Milton was the result of a transformation which his mind had undergone from the earlier notion. In his earlier writings Milton had accorded almost entirely with the

[14] Milton's Imagery And The Visual Arts, Ronald Mushat Frye, Princeton University Press, New Jersey (1978), p.72.

hideous image of the devil.

Th' old dragon under ground
In straiter limits bound
Not half so far casts his usurped sway
And wrath to see his Kingdom fail
Swindges the scaly Horror of his folded tail.[15]

By the time he began 'Paradise Lost' his attitude had remarkably changed and he conceived of Satan in totally different manner. His demon also shows a changing feature from good to bad and then to worse. There are stages of degradation, and any one picture of Satan would not depict him fully within the framework of Milton. In Book I of Paradise Lost he describes:

he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower, his form had not yet lost
All her original brighteness; nor appeared
Less than Arch-Angel ruined, and the excess
Of Glory obscured.[16]

The demon of Milton is not static as may have been depicted in art. He has a poetic dimension, and being the creature of poetic imagination, moves and appears in incomprehensible

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[15] John Milton: On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, ll. 167-171.

[16] P.L., I, ll. 589-594.

and unanticipated form. He is mobile and his mind changes according to the state of affairs in the epic. The angelic conduct of Satan continues for a considerably long period and definitely until the tenth Book of Paradise Lost. But since Milton has planned to lead him to ultimate condemnation the demon can not be allowed to remain without exhibiting the gradual and occasional deterioration before the final ruin. That would have become unnatural from poetic point of view. It is, therefore, found that even before the tenth Book, Satan, now and then, stoops into disfiguration while retaining his native angelic gesture. The first change in Satan is seen when he alights upon Niphates to view the place of his pre-designate in the form of Man:

> Then from the lofty stand on that high Tree
> Down he alights among the sportful Herd
> Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
> Now other, as their shape served best his end
> Nearer to view his prey, and unspied
> To mark what of their state he more might learn
> --- --- ---- ---- ---- ----
> A Lion now he stalks with fiery glare
> Then as a Tiger, who by chance hath spied
> In some purlieu two gentle Fawns at play,
> Strait couches close, then rising changes oft.
> His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground
> Whence rushing he might surest seize them both.[17]

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[17] P.L., IV, ll. 395-407.

Though deformity in the demons becomes visible enough to be marked, Milton carefully refrains from giving a detailed description: the gorgeous plumage of angelic wings is not explicitly replaced with the horns, hooves and tail of medieval notion of a demon. Though an outward deformity is unmistakably acknowledged, Milton purposely keeps it vague and focusses our attention invested upon the more generalized outward sign of an inner and spiritual disgrace:

> and on the Assyrian mount
> Saw him disfigured more than could befall
> Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
> He marked and made demeanour, then alone
> As he suppos'd, all unobserv'd, unseen.[18]

Other references convey the same generalized effect, evoking the impressions created by the distorted image but refusing to allow the specific visual details of that distortion to obliterate the continuing attraction of the demonic. In Book IV Satan is "the grisly king and his visage is marred" by evil passions. Milton keeps Satan outwardly appealing and internalizes the conflicting passions. Satan himself refers to the feelings:

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[18] P.L., IV, ll. 126-130.

but I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from The hateful siege
Of contraries; all good to me becomes
Bane, and in Heav'n much worse would be my state.[19]

Again Milton declares that only in destroying he finds ease -

But what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound:
For only in destroying I find ease
To my relentless thoughts; and him destroyed
Or won to what may work his utter loss
For whom all this was made, all this will soon
Follow, as to him linkt in weal or woe:

The recognition by the damn'd of the lostness does not dampen the endeavour, rather it strenghhens it. This is the characteristic of Milton's Satan who says:

which way I fly is Hell, myself am Hell.

Abdiel acuses Satan of being 'to thyself enthralled'.

These instances show how Milton internalizes the conception of what could by an artist be presented in objective visual form only.

[19]P.L., IX, ll. 118-123.

Even where Milton refers to some very particular physical detail of the distorted image, he keeps it at some remove from the devils themselves. Upto Milton's time, devils were more often represented with the taloned feet of harpies than with the cloven hooves which have in succeeding centuries become more popular. Milton provides these conventional visual details in Hell, but describes it to his 'harpy-footed furies' rather than to the devils themselves. As with the feet, so with the head: Milton refers to the shaggy and bristling 'horrid' hair which characterised the pointed devils, but again he puts this at some remove. In his flight from Hell to earth, Satan is likened to

> a comet burn'd
> That fires the length of Ophiucus huge
> In th' Arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shakes pestilence and war.[20]

Milton here applies the description not to his Satan but only to a body of comet with which he compares Satan.

The medieval artists produced not only Satan chewing on a sinner, but also devils man-handling and dragging people about. Milton does not show his fallen angels doing any such acts of predation but he does several times compare

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[20] P.L., II, ll. 708-11.

Satan to a predatory bird or animal:

> So on this windie Sea of Land, the Fiend
> Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey.[21]

By showing Satan as a fiend bent on his prey Milton invested him with some of the terror that informs medieval conceptions of a bestial devil. Without demonizing the fallen angels in the model of historical notion of demons where Satan has talons and cloven feet and is served by pride in the form of a savage dog, Milton nevertheless preserved enough of Satan's demonic aspect to suggest the immense capacity for destruction of the powers with which man must reckon. Seen as a predator, Satan has at least a distant kinship with those black hairy devils with claws and beaks who carry off sinners to their damnation.

The fiends of Middle Ages with hideous faces did not fit Milton's needs. In spite of that, they were so deeply in possession of the minds of the age of Milton that he could not totally ignore them. They had become a part of tradition and Milton made use of them to certain extent and in a different form. Milton endeavoured to liberate the minds of his readers from concerning the devils only, or even

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[21] P.L., III, ll. 440-44.

primarily within the distorted image of fiend. Traditionally deformed devil, Milton thought, would exert a downward pull upon the imagination of his readers, and he consequently attempted to compensate for that drag by his own poetic exaltation of Satan. It was co-incident with the passing away of the older usual and conceptual understanding of Satan that some readers began to feel that Milton had made the devil the hero of his poem. Fortunately, those who misread Paradise Lost have remained a small minority. Intelligent readers need to be aware not only of what Milton incorporated in his epic but also of what excluded from it. The range of visualization of devils in art was surprisingly broad, and it not only provided Milton with much to reject, but also with much on which he could build.

It follows, therefore, that Milton had before him various concepts of demons' bodies and minds and it was open to make use of them, to alter, modify or totally change the notion in creating a Satan for Paradise Lost. Before I proceed further to deal with Satan I consider it necessary to examine how Tulasi Das conceived of gods and demons in 'Ramcaritmanas'. The conception of possessing strange shapes and peculiar behaviour is common to both the gods

and the demons in 'Ramcaritmanas' also. The strangness, deformities and distortions do not qualify any one either to be god or to be demon. These features are assigned to give an air of unearthliness only irrespective of benevolence or malevolence of the being. Ravana, the demon king, possesses ten heads and twenty arms. The organic multiplicity of Ravana alone does not declare to be a demon. If these were so, then Vishnu, the supreme deity, the Brahma and the Shiva may all be called demons, because they are also described as many-faced gods. Ganesh, the foremost deity to be worshipped, possesses an elephant's trunk. Not only that, Shesa is said to have one thousand heads. But they are not equated with the demons of Ravana's family. Let us see how Lord Shiva, the most favourite and beloved god of Tulasi Das is accompanied by a band of strange and deformed followers in his own well-adorned marriage procession:

> They all came when they heard Shiva's command
> And bowed their heads to the lotus feet of their lord.
> Shiva smiled to behold the band of his people
> They were in Chariots varied and robes multiple.
> Some were mouthless and some had many,
> Some had many arms and legs and some were without any.
> Many eyes some of them had, and some were eyeless,

Some were stout and some were frail,
Some were diseased and some very healthy,
Some were holy and others looked filthy.
Frightful ornaments they wore
And in their hands skulls they bore,
They bodies they had bathed with blood of gore,
Their faces resembled the faces of dogs
Of asses, jackals and hogs
And numberless they were, who could count all,
Goblins and fiends and elves assembled in rows
They were of various kinds which can not be told.
All the sprites were gay, they danced and sang
Repulsive were their faces and speeches strange.[23]

The difference between the Miltonic concept of demons as inherited from ancient literary and visual art and the concept of Tulasi Das in 'Ramcaritmanas' is that in the former the form is the index of qualities while in the latter it is not so. What is abominable and terrible to look at must possess loathsome ideas and cruel heart in the Miltonic myth. In Tulasi Das the quality of mind and heart is not determined by the outward appearance. Hydra-headedness is not the feature of demons only but of the gods also. These gods despite their odd and ugly appearances are full of abundant grace contrary to the demons

[23]Ramcaritmanas, B.K., ll. 92d, 10-30.

who are not only ugly and strange in forms but also cruel and mischievous in qualities.

I I I

In 'Ramayana' of Valmiki Ravan is described not merely as a leader but also as a King whose will is law. He is a king of demons, but in general estimation, he is held as the supreme monarch of all, the gods and demons. The caricature of Satan falls short of this estimation. Satan is a leader, and that too, a self-styled one. Though he stands high amidst his followers, his highness is not taken for granted. It is to be argued and proved by his subsequent action. Ravana is a widely acknowledged emperor with all the amenities of royalty for his enjoyment.

> "His palace is adorned with heavenly lustre and he is laced with jewels of peerless beauty. He can change shapes at his will. He is said to be the giver of joy to demons. His complexion is as dark as clouds. His eyes are red and he wears golden clothes. He dallies with women of beauty par excellence. He is described normally as having two long arms. Fast asleep he appears like a wrathful snake."[24]

These descriptions are repeated on other occasions also.

[24] Ramayana, S.K., Chap. X, ll. 7-11.

One of these occasions, when Ravana is described with regard to his qualities and conduct, is the meeting of Ravana with Seeta. He possesses ten heads here and Seeta addresses him as "dasmukh" i.e. ten mouthed."[25] A little later he is described as having two arms only.[26] His complexion is as dark as dark clouds. His body is huge and stout. In conduct and valour he looks like a lion. His eyes are again terrible and tongue as red as flames.[27] This shows that Ravana in Valmiki is normally one-headed and two-armed. On abnormal occasions he assumes various forms. His terrible form bewilders Hanuman also, the same red and terrible eyes and terrifying dark complexion.[28] In battle-field he is described more than once as 'dasanan' and 'dasmukh' i.e. ten-mouthed while in open and face to face confrontation with Rama.[29]

In the last canto Ravana at birth is described as extremely terrible and cruel. He possesses ten heads, twenty arms, lips like copper, wide and large mouths and shining hair. His body is compared to a black mountain of coal. Further his birth is followed by bloody showers, terrible

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[25] Ramayana, S.K., Chap. XXII, l. 20.

[26] Ramayana, S.K., Chap. XXII, l. 27.

[27] Ramayana, S.K., Chap. XXII, l. 24.

[28] Ramayana, S.K., Chap. X, ll. 7-11.

[29] Ramayana, Yuddhakand, Chap. CVII, l. 8.

thunder, fading of the sun, tremor of the earth and tempest.[30] Ravana is a great conqueror in Valmiki. He deprives Kubera of his celestial chariot. He constructs a splendid palace for his brother, Kumbhkarna. He enters into confrontation with many and above all with Shiva himself.[31] He molests the daughter of Kushadhwaj named Vedawati and declares war against all those who are right, good and truthful. His notoriety is infinite and conforms to his hideous countenance and colossal stature.

In 'Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa' also Ravana is called ten-headed. His appearance and size and qualities of cruelty are un-changed. His attitude, though palliable being conditioned by the consciousness of his own finiteness, is basically the same towards his opponents. His desire to make Seeta his wife becomes diluted with the fear that Seeta might become the cause of his ruin also. His confrontation with Rama is made forceless by his own doubts about his success. Ravana is not elaborately developed here as in Valmiki. He is less demonic and lapses under the towering shadows of Rama's divine stature. He vascillates, doubts and anticipates the possibilities of self-amalgamation with Rama. Ravana of 'Bhagawat' is also in

[30] Ramayana, U.K., Chap. IX, ll. 28-32.

[31] Ramayana, U.K. Chap. XVI, ll. 11-37.

the same style. There are sketches of his character and deeds but without much difference in 'Mahabharat' also. The concept of Ravana as envisaged in 'Ramcaritmanas' does not show much deviation from the past. The possession of ten heads and twenty arms conveys the feelings of hideousness and terror associated with his appearance. The profusely adorned crown and jewels of his body make him look more fiendish than royal. They add to the horror of his countenance instead of adding any charm to his person. On some occasions he is presented as having a normal human form in Valmiki. Such occasions are primarily motivated with lust to arouse amorous feelings among the women. Tradition had established a bad name for Ravan. Literally his name means one who makes the people weep, be they gods, demons or saints. That is what Tulasi Das found from the tradition. In his epic he works out a Ravana of his own notion, but the notion does not alter the deeply rooted concept of pride and cruelty which the tradition associated with Ravana. Before I proceed to deal with this aspect I shall return to Milton's Satan for a while.

I V

The treatment of Satan in the hands of Milton far exceeds the general expectations. That Satan might appear

merely as a devil in Paradise Lost is also not true. By the enormous space Satan received in Paradise Lost he was on the threshold of occupying the position of a hero, and indeed, for some time he was considered so by the critics of Milton. Though the argument in favour of Satan as hero has never been generally acknowledged, Satan continues to play an eminent role in all the times to come.

According to some authors the seventeenth and eighteenth century reader reacted to Milton's Satan with honor and revulsion. But by the close of the eighteenth century that strangely modern feelings of aspiration, that insatiable desire to know all things and do all things and scorn all restraint, was beginning to penetrate, the culture of the western world.[32] It is in this light that the changing concept developed regarding Satan. Milton, however, conceived of Satan in a large and grand way. Paradise Lost was after all not going to be merely a lament for the past glory of England as was initially thought by some people. Milton gives Satan a human acceptance and makes him behave like a revolutionary. Milton himself was a revolutionary and Satan in spite of what was historical

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[32] Ronal Mushat Frye: Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1978, p.77

notion about him acts like a rebel. Normally every rebel suffers expulsion and strives for his reinstatement in a self-created world after his own notion. Satan is no exception. The character of Satan, even though we may not assign to him the role of a hero, is undoubtedly greatly heroic, and Milton gave more time and space to fashion his Satan than any one else. It is neither to eulogize nor to condemn the rebellious demeanour of Satan but to make use of him to reveal the mischief that needed remedy. The character of Satan is an instrument for interpretation of revolutionary processes taking place in the political history of England. The ups and downs of massive political events throb into the veins of Satan. Satan therefore is not static. He moves, he changes and he beholds his degradation. He is overpowered by despair at the end, delights at his success in creating mortality for man and is ultimately doomed into a heinous rolling reptile.

Milton transforms Satan into a means to explain the contemporary political history of England. It is true that Paradise Lost is not a historical document, it is a poem. But it can not also be denied that it embodies the aspiration that activates the forces of history. Milton himself was

drawn, not involuntarily, into the political activities of his age. At times he instigated the revolution, himself turning out a rebel, he watched the courses of the movements and displayed his serious concern for them. Until April 1660 the revolutionaries held power, however insecurely. The royalists in England had been defeated, although they were desperately scheming revenge. In Book I and II Satan is wrong, but grandly wrong. His attempt 'against the omnipotent to rise in arms' seemed as absurd as Royalist attempt to reverse the verdict of history

> thy hope was to have reached
> The higth of thy aspiring unopposed
> The throne of God unguarded, and his side
> Abandoned at the terror of thy power
> Or potent tongue, fool, not to think how vain
> Against th' Omnipotent to rise in Arms;
> Who out of smallest things could without end
> Have rais'd incessant Armies to defeat
> Thy folly; or with solitary hand
> Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow
> Unaided could have finish'd thee.[33]

But after May 1660 Satan was not trying vainly to recover power in England; he had won it. His degradation in the second half of the epic is the greater because of Milton's

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[33] P.L. VI, ll. 131-141.

disgusted realization of the power and influence of evil. It is parallelled by the stepping forward of the creator - son and the withdrawal of the impersonal Father. We should not then see Satan just as the apothesis of rebellion. One subject of Paradise Lost is rebellion and Milton himself had been a rebel. He wanted to know where he and his fellows had been mistaken, what kind of rebellion was justified and what was not.

Satan is a king as Christ is. He was by merit raised to Kingship in hell, as the son had been in heaven. In the early books Satan's grandeur and ruined splendour predominate. But Satan is also an Asiatic tyrant, associated with Turkish despotism[34] as Charles I had been in 'Eikonoklastes'. Since 1649 another group of men had been called 'Turkish-bashaws' - Cromwell's Major Generals. It is not unlikely that there is something of them in the fallen angels. The latter are not mere personifications of evil. They were angels of light who have rejected the light. As Northrop Frye says, 'into Satan Milton has put all the horror and distress with which he contemplated the egocentric revolutionaries of his time', whose romantic rhetoric had got them - and those who trusted them - nowhere.

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[34] Christopher Hill: Milton and English Revolution, Faber and Faber, London, 1977, p.166.

If among other things, the character of Satan alludes to some of the ways in which the Good Old cause had gone wrong, it is to be expected that he will contain a good deal of Milton who recognized that he too was not without responsibility - for its failure. Milton's intellect now told him that he must accept God's will, if only because the Father is Omnipotent: but his submission to the events of 1655-60 was highly reluctant, Satan, the battle-ground for Milton's quarrel with himself, saw God as arbitrary power and nothing else. Against this he revolted, the Christian, Milton knew, must accept it. Yet how could a free and rational individual accept what God had done to his servants in England? On this reading, Milton expressed through Satan the dissatisfaction which he felt with the Father.

Satan has freedom without self-discipline, dynamic energy and driving individualism with no recognition of limits. Satan has more to say about liberty than any other character in Paradise Lost. Milton had heard the name of liberty bandied about a good deal by either side during the civil war. Satan's kind of liberty, like the ranter's kind, became licence. This was negation of freedom. About equality also Satan has much to say:

> fardest from him is best
> Whom reason hath equalled, force hath mode supreme
> Above his equals.[35]

This shows there is a good deal of Milton in Satan. Satan is heroic : as heroic as Milton still thinks the English revolution had been. But the Revolution had utterly failed. It had failed because the men were not enough for the cause. Satan had always been a rebel for the wrong reasons - self-interest, jealousy, ambition. Satan was a personification of selfish Reason. As early as 1641 Milton had been arguing that the selfishness and greed which were mixed up with the motives of the original reformers did not destroy the value of the Protestant Reformation. Now perhaps he saw deeper. We must, however, not take Milton's condemnation of Satan as condemnation of rebellion, any more than we should take his acceptance of hierarchy of being from man up to God as acceptance of a traditional social hierarchy of 'degree'. Milton's is a hierarchy of virtue, of merit. In 'Paradise Lost' Adam increases in virtue as Satan decreases.

Nevertheless the magnificient Satan of early Books of Paradise Lost does convey some of defiance which Milton himself must have felt tempted to hurl in the face of the

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[35] P.L., I, ll. 248-50.

Omnipotence as the Republic crashed about his ears. The rebellious energy ebbs in the later books, after the restoration of Charles II has brought Milton to recognize the full magnitude of the rethinking that is required. Perhaps Milton felt that he and his peers had been too tolerant of the Satanic fellow travellers of the Revolution. God, after all, is not only king of English commonwealth, he is also the historical process. What he wills is fate. So Satan is a rebel against history itself, not some one Milton can identify with. In the 'De Doctrina' Milton began his list of the sins involved in the Fall of Man with credulity in Satan and lack of confidence in God. It ends with deceit, aspiration for divinity, pride and arrogance. Presumptuous aspiration, use of wrong means pride and arrogance : they are the vices against which Milton and other radicals had warned Oliver Cromwell and his generals.

After the cry for liberty had degenerated into a mere cry resulting in confusion and misunderstanding Milton gave a rethinking and expressed his desire that the ideals must be reinforced by self-discipline and limitations. The cause was initiated by the English Revolution. Satan represents that Revolution in a heroic manner in Paradise Lost by declaring an open war, and to that extent there is great

deal of Milton in him. But soon it was discovered that the English Revolution had failed. Milton scrutinizes the causes of failure and he discerns the faults in Satan. This is how Milton makes his Satan responsible for the failure of the Revolution. Satan pleads for freedom, but without self-discipline. He possesses dynamic energy and driving individualism but without recognition of limits. Of all the characters in Paradise Lost it is Satan who speaks of liberty more than others. The ideal of liberty therefore becomes devoid of the qualities of true freedom. The idea is prominently revealed in his Sonnet XII :

> I did but prompt the age to quit their cloggs
> By the known rules of ancient libertie
> When strait a barbarous noise environs me
> Of Owles and Cuckovs, Assess, Apes and Doggs.
> As when those Hinds that were transform'd to froggs
> Rail'd at 'Laton', twin-borne progenie
> Which often held the Sun and Moon in fee.
> But this is got by casting pearls to hoggs;
> That howl for freedom in their senseless mood
> And still revolt when truth would set them free
> Licence they mean when they cry libertie
> For who loves that must first be wise and good
> But from that mark how far they roave we see
> For all this vast wealth and loss of blood.

Satan has always been a rebel for the wrong reasons. He was

motivated by jealousy and self-interest. He was a personification of selfish ambition. Milton makes use of Satan as a rebel to represent his negative personality also. The reasons of failures of his long cherished ideals lie in Satan. Milton condemns Satan for the same reason. The vices of pursuit for a noble cause internally prove destructive of the cause itself and Satan embodies the vices in Paradise Lost. Satan is a force of perversion and Milton uses him for perversion in Paradise Lost. He prevents the Good Old cause with which Milton was deeply concerned.

The other precious doctrine of Milton which is negated by Satan is that of equality. Milton had deeply held his faith in the principle of equality among equals. This does not and must not conflict with his belief in the concept of hierarchy. Satan has much to say about equality in Paradise Lost:

> fardest from him is best
> Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
> Above his equals.[36]

Milton's notion of equality must be interpreted in terms of the theory of Aristotle who tells that 'to rule and to be

ruled are things according to Nature'. The soul is the natural ruler of the body, the male of the female, reason of passion. Now many kinds of rule are there will depend on how many kinds of superiority or inferiority are there. A man may rule his slaves despotically, his children monarchically and his wife politically. The justice or injustice of any given instance of rule depends wholly on the nature of the parties, not in the least on any social contract. Where the citizens are really equal they ought to live in a republic where all rule in turn. If they are not really equal then the republican form becomes unjust. The difference between a king and a tyrant does not turn exclusively on the fact that one rules mildly and the other harshly. A king is one who rules over his real, natural inferiors. He who rules permanently, without successor, over his natural equals is a tyrant even if he rules well. Justice means equality for equals and inequality for unequals. This belief in the Order, i.e., the Superior and Inferior is destroyed by Satan by drawing his wrong notion of equality to clash with it in two ways: by ruling natural equals; by failing to obey natural superior. In Book V Satan's argument is hampered by the fact that he particularly wants to avoid equality among his own faction and therefore has to turn aside for a moment to explain:

and if not equal all, yet free
Equally free; for Orders and Degrees
Jarr not with liberty.[37]

Satan contends that the Vice-regency of the son is a tyranny in the Aristotlian sense:

Who can in reason then or right, assume
Monarchie over such as live by right
His equals.[38]

Abdiel refutes the argument of Satan by saying that Satan has no right to question the action of God:

Canst thou with impious obloquie condemn
The just decree of God, pronounc't and sworn
That to his only son by right endued
With Regal Scepter, every soul in Heaven
Shall bend the knee and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? Unjust thou saist
Flatly unjust, to bind with Laws the free
And equal over equals to let Reign
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give Law to God, shalt dispute
With him the points of libertie, who made
Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of Heaven
Such as he pleased ....[39]

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[37]P.L. V, ll. 791-93.

[38]P.L. V, ll. 194-96.

[39]P.L. V, ll. 814-825.

Satan tries to hold up his argument but becomes more ludicrous when he stoops to plead:

> We know no time when we were not as now
> Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
> By our own quickening power ....[40]

The doctrine of equality as conceived by Milton in terms of his Hierarchical theory is not the same as professed by Satan. Milton declares Satan as the tyrant and not the God. Satan is a 'sultan, a much hated name throughout the Christian world. He is the 'chief', the 'general', the great 'commander'. He is the machievellian prince who excuses his political 'realism' by 'necessity, the tyrant's plea'. His rebellion begins with the slogan for liberty but very soon proceeds to:

> Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers
> If these magnific Titles ....[41]

Thus by a grand and exhaustive treatment of Satan in all his aspects Milton rejects the mistaken notion of liberty, equality, justice and tyranny.

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[40] P.L. V, ll. 859-61.

[41] P.L. V, ll. 772.

V

Like Satan of Milton Ravan, as delineated by Tulasi Das, possesses tremendous physical force and tireless energy for pursuing the object of his aspiration. But again like Satan his force and energy are misdirected and sadly misused. There are aspects in his character which Tulasi Das admires, but for some vices of his character, those admirable aspects bear no fruit. The responsible factor for these vices is his boastful over-estimation of his power. He reckons on his glorious past and ignores the possibility of future defeat. Satan has, on the other hand, the experience of being shamefully expelled from the angelic world, and against this dark experience of the past strives hard to create and perpetuate a royal position for himself. In their conduct both Satan and Ravan are misdirected. Though Ravan is not a replica of Satan yet in his conduct some resemblances are discerned on account of being handled in identical manner. His character can be viewed from the point of view of his demon followers and the point of view of the followers of Rama. Besides these two points of view there is another point of view with which Ravan estimates his own worth. This point of view has two spheres - one when Ravan thinks alone and speaks to himself, the other when he is with

others and speaks to them about himself. First, that Ravan is held high by his demon followers assumes a point of importance when they are seen arguing with him on the plea of giving advices. All the demons are not of one mind. Some of them are sensible. They want to drive home to Ravan the reality of the situation. Mareech advises Ravan not to antagonise Ram. He says:

> O ten headed Ravan! listen
> In human form he is the Lord of Creation.
> O dear! no enmity with him must have you
> It is he who makes us live and die too
> These princes had been to guard the altar of the sage
> And Rama hit me with an arrow spikeles
> In a moment thrown off I was, hundred of miles away
> To incur enmity with him is never safe.
> Now I am caught like an insect by a 'bhringi'
> And both the brothers everywhere I see.
> O dear! though human in form, valiant they are
> No victory you will achieve with them in war
> He killed Tadaka and Sabahu
> And broke into pieces Shiva's bow.
> Khar, Dusan, Trisira he killed
> Can a man so valiant be?
> Hence for the well being of your race return home.[42]

Ravan replies:

> Like a teacher you instruct me O fool!
> Tell me, a warrior like me, in the world is who?

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[42] Ramcaritmanas, Ar. K., ll. 24d, 5-21.

Mandodary, the beloved wife of Ravan, is deeply concerned with her husband's welfare and she advises:

> O dearest husband! abandon enmity with Hari
> And my best advice in your heart keep
> O dearest lord! if you care for your life
> Summon ministers and send back his wife
> Whose messenger's velour even to remember
> Before the time the wives of demons give birth,
> Like a winter night Seeta has come for distress
> For the lotus wood of your race
> O Lord! listen, unless you give Seeta back
> You cannot be saved even by Brahma and Mahesh.
> Like multitude of serpents are Rama's arrows
> And the hosts of demons are like the toads
> Be not adamant and take some measure
> Before we are all devoured up.[43]

Ravan replies:

> True it is, women are by nature timid
> You doubt my great success, your heart is weak.
> If the army of monkeys here arrives
> The poor demons shall satisfy their appetite.

In Sundarkand we notice how Vibhisan, the youngest brother of Ravan advises:

> O brother!
> He who wants his welfare and fair deed

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[43] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., ll. 35d, 11-24.

Noble thoughts, holy life and bliss
Must the wives of others shun.
O Lord! like the fourth day's moon of the month
Be there the monarch of the fourteen realms
He can not survive at enmity with the world.
No one calls him noble who least avarice displays
Despite his wisdom and ocean of grace.
O Lord! desire, anger, pride and greed
Are the paths towards hell to lead
Worship Rama having abandoned all
Whom the saints keep always at heart.
O dear! Rama is not only a king of men
But the Lord of the Universe and death of death.
He is the Absolute, faultless, birthless and God
Invincible, eternal, Omnipoetent and Infinite Lord
- -
Abandon malice and bow your head
Rama destroys his refugee's distress
O Lord! return Vaidehi to that Lord
And worship Rama who loves without cause.[44]

Ravan replies:

How dare you praise my enemy O fools!
Is there anyone them to remove?

There are other two occasions when Mandodari makes desperate appeal to her husband to change his mind:

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[44] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., ll. 37d, 1-22.

(i) O dearest! listen to me and wrath forsake,
O Lord! be at war only with him
Whom by talent and valour you can win.
Rama and you verily differ so
It were the glow-worm and sun as though.
He who killed Madhu and Kaitabh, the mighty demons
And killed also Ditti's valiant sons,
He who bound Vali and Sahastrvahu killed
Has incarnated himself to make the earth free.
O Lord! do not strive him to oppose
In whose hands lie, death, deeds and soul.
Surrender to Rama and return Janaki
Having bowed your head to his lotus feet.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
He for whom the high sages seek
And the kings forsake thrones to become ascetics
Is Raghunath, the lord of Raghu race
Who has come here to grant his grace.[45]

(ii) O dearest Lord! to my prayer listen
Abandon war with Rama, O husband!
Be not obstinate to mistake him for a man
Believe me for what I say.
He is the Absolute in the form of the gem of Raghu race
The Vedas personify existence of
The spheres of the Universe in his every part,
The netherworld is his feet and the Heaven is his head
The other spheres in his other limbs dwell.

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[45] *Ramcaritmanas*, L.K., 11. 5d, 7-25.

The frown of his brow creates terrible time
The clouds are his hairs and the sun dwells in his eyes
Ten directions make his ears, the Vedas say
The Vedas are his words and the air his breath
. . . .
His face is fire and tongue firmament
His acts are Creation, Preservation and End.
- -- - - - - - - - - - - - - -- - - - - - - -
Shiva is his ego and Brahma his reason
The moon is his mind and the Absolute his wisdom
The same God of Universal form
Dwells in the human body of Ram
O lord of my life! consider you thus
And enmity with the Lord give up.
The feet of Rama you must worship
That my wedded fortune I do not miss.[46]

These are the advices given by his kiths and kins. But Ravan does not realize how grave the situation is. The right and reasonable demons declare that if Ravan does not conquer his pride he shall die. It is here that they hold common views with the enemy camp. Hanuman and Angad belong to the enemy camp and both of them speak out the frightening consequences of confrontation with Rama in order that Ravan may change his mind and be saved. But destined to countenance disaster Ravan does not pay heed. He ridicules and rebukes them. Hanuman in his dialogue with Ravan says:

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[46] Ramcaritmanas, L.K., 11, 13d & 14, 1-25.

O Ravan! listen
Illusion by His strength this universe fashions
Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, O Ravan!
Create, preserve and destroy the Universe by His power
By His might Shesa bears on his heads
Whole universe with mountains and forests.
He assumes various shapes for protection of gods
And to fools like you lessons imparts.
He broke the tough bow of Shankar too
And crushed the pride of kings including you.
Khar, Dursan, Trisira and Bali
The valiant and matchless warriors he killed.
By the little of his grace you could win
The whole creation stable and moving
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
O Ravan! with folded hands I pray:
Abandon your pride and listen to what I say
Death devours all, the creation, the demons and the gods
Yet it is afraid of that Lord
With whom you must not enmity cause
And return Janaki as I ask.[47]

Similarly Angad meets Ravan as Rama's envoy and advises him to change his mind and surrender to Rama before it is too late:

O Ravan! I am Rama's envoy
There was friendship between you and my father
For your good, hence, I have come, O brother!

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[47] Ramcaritmanas, S.K., ll. 20d, 6-26.

Your clan is high, the grandson of Pulastya you are
You worshipped in many ways Brahma and Shiva
They gave you boon and you accomplished all tasks
The rulers of realms and kings you conquered all.
In ignorance or pride of being sovereign
Seeta you have kidnapped, the mother of universe
Now to my good advice listen
The Lord shall forgive you for your offence
Put a straw under the teeth and an axe on shoulder
Your kiths and kins and wife take for escort
Take the daughter of Janak in front with honour
And march you on, having all fear given up.
Pray : O Rama! save me, save me,
O gem of Raghu race and protector of refugees!
The Lord shall make you then fearless
Having heard your words of distress.[48]

From what has been said above it is more than obvious that Ravan is as incorrigible as Satan. He is also embodiment of all those vices which prove disastrous at the end, as is the case with Satan. In all these both Satan and Ravan seem to have been delineated in identical line. Satan revolts against God and knows it that he revolts against God. Here he differs from Ravan. Ravan does not revolt but is instigated by his sister to fight for his sovereign

[48] Ramcaritmanas, L.K., 11, 19d, 3-22.

prestige. This is how he decides to encounter Rama. Since the poet of 'Ramcharitmanas' believes that Rama is the supreme unconquerable power he saves Ravana from the ridicule and embarrassment of confrontation with Rama. Ravan neither desires nor decides to win war against the supreme God. Tulasi Das does not intend Ravan to rise in arms against the God for self-aggrandisement or self-advancement. Tulasi Das therefore makes Ravan doubt the divinity of Rama. He takes him at a human level. His wisdom is made defunct and overshadowed by the darkness of his pride and foolishness. This is made clear when Ravan argues to himself:

> Among gods, men, demons, serpents and birds
> There are none like my followers.
> Khar and Dusan were as brave as I am
> Who else but God could kill them?
> If that God has incarnated at all
> To mitigate the sufferings of the Earth to please gods,
> Then I shall go and wage a war perforce
> To receive salvation being killed by the Lord's arrows
> No prayer is possible with a demon's body
> Hence this I resolve with mind, deeds and speech
> If they are princes in human forms
> I shall conquer them in battle and the woman carry off.[49]

Ravan's battle is thus lost before he fights. There are,

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[49] *Ramcaritmanas:* Ar. K., ll. 22d, 1-12.

however, two points involved in the argument of Ravan. Firstly, his belief that none could kill Khar and Dusan except the God makes him think that he too may suffer like them. The apprehension of himself being killed also dawns upon him, and none except God then must have descended to kill him. Thus it should be unnecessary to hesitate. Secondly, the possibility of his own death makes him desperate also. He therefore pretends to gain in both the ways. If Rama be a man, Ravana hopes to get Rama's wife by killing him. On the other hand, if he be a God, Ravana cherishes the hope of attaining salvation being killed at his hand. The first is considered abominable by the poet and the second honourable choice. Tulasi Das handles it in such a way that the pursuit for the goal of the first choice becomes ultimately the instrument for awarding the remotely cherished goal of Ravana's second choice. Ravan does not challenge Rama directly but only takes away his wife. This shows that he stakes to the abominable alternative. This is in instigation for Rama to challenge and to reveal his capacity as an incarnation of God. Having thus provoked Rama he forgets until the end of his life that Rama may be the God. He then justifies his acts of stealing away Seeta as a mark of avenging the insult of his sister. This initiates confrontation which,

he believes, will give him one of the two things - a woman or salvation. In Paradise Lost the rebellion of Satan has neither any base nor any destination. He aims at aimlessness. His rebellion is also an action which seems to have failed from the very beginning by its own nature. He believes that his war in heaven was to annoy the God to teach him a lesson. As a result of his defeat Satan is hurled into a burning hell followed by all his fellow rebel angels. Ravan speculates salvation as a result of defeat, a higher reward than any victory on earth could bring. The presumption of self-glorification in confrontation with and defeat at the hand of God makes the battle of Ravan free from ridicule. Milton does not show that charity to Satan in Paradise Lost.

Once the battle is started Ravan takes Rama as his enemy, and unlike Satan, does not allow lack of confidence to cause confusion in his camp. Tension in Satan gradually declines whereas in Ravan it rises only until he himself is killed. Satan's defeat signifies a spiritual death for him. He returns to the Pandemonium with message of success in doing mischief to man. His news that man has lost the Paradise is received by his fellows with a shocking hiss. Until then Satan is unaware of his loathsome transformation together with his fellow angels into reptiles. A sudden

realisation of his own doom frustrates his malicious success:

> So having said, a while he stood, expecting
> Their universal shout and high applause
> To fill his ear, when contrary he hears
> On all sides, from innumerable tongues
> A dismal universal Hiss, the sound
> Of public scorn; he wondered, but not long
> Had leisure, wondering at himself now more
> His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
> His Arms clung to his Ribs, his legs entwining
> Each other, till supplanted down he fell
> A monstrous serpent on his belly prone
> Reluctant, but in vain: a greater power
> Now rul'd him, punish'd in the shape he sinned
> According to his doom: he would have spoke
> But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
> To forked tongue, for now were all transformed
> Alike, to serpents all as accessories
> To his bold Riot.[50]

In 'Ramcaritmanas' the death of Ravan gives relief to the much frightened creatures of the earth. It puts the long laboured bones of Ravan also to rest. There is no punishment to follow his defeat and death. There is no condemnation of his evil deeds after his death. He is on the other hand praised having been blessed to die at the hands of Rama.

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[50] P.L. X, ll. 504-520.

Mandodari mourns the death of her husband in the following words:

O Lord! Earth trembled your might to behold
And before you the fire, the moon, the sun lost their glow.
The Tortoise and Shesa could endure not your weight
The same body lies in dust today
Varun, Kuber, Indra, and Air
To face you in battle never could dare.
O Lord! you conquered death and Yama by your might
But today like an orphan here you lie.
The world is aware of the glory of your might
The valour of sons and Kinsmen none could describe
But this is your plight to Rama being hostile.
To mourn your death no kinsmen survive.
O Lord! the universe of Brahma was at your command,
And the Dikkpals bowed to you ever in awe.
But alas! your heads and hands jackals eat
For the enemy of Rama this is but meet
O Lord! you heeded no advice to death being driven,
And the Lord of the Universe you considered man.
You thought of him simply as a man
That Hari, the fire to burn the forest of demons.
You worshipped not O dearest Lord!
The merciful Lord who is revered by Shiva, Brahma and gods
From the birth your sinful body was engaged
In inflicting on others harms and distress.
But Rama gave you a place in his abode
The spotless and the Absolute to whom I bow.

Ah! O lord! no one there is
Like Raghunath, a sea of mercy
The God who bestowed upon you that estate
Which is hard even for the assembly of sages.[51]

The doctrine of punishment in 'Ramcaritmanas' does not aim at vengeance nor at perpetration of perpetuity. Even the enemy of Rama attains holiness by his confrontation with him. Ravan is made sinless after death and does not reap the consequences of his sin in perpetuity like Satan. The followers of Ravan also attain the same position as Ravan after death unlike Satan's guilt which transforms all his followers into reptiles. Satan suffers a spiritual gloom by his damnation. Ravan achieves salvation by death. Thus Tulasi Das makes Ravan to achieve his remote goal of self-salvation by his death.

Among the qualities common to both Satan and Ravan the most obvious is their resort to deceptive appearance. To achieve their ends both of them possess the capacity for assuming disguises. Satan changes into a snake and speaks fair words to mesmerize Eve. This is a miraculous performance under a heinous and beastly disguise. Eve at the first instance suffers a momentary shock and speaks:

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[51] Ramcaritmanas: L.K., 11. 103d, 9-31.

What may this mean? Language of Man pronounc't
By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest?[52]

Goodness being revealed through hideous appearance is an unbelievable proposition, and this abnormal occurrence is viewed by Eve with distrust and doubts. But Satan holds a grip over her reasonings and encourages her to fall in his trap by persuasion:

Queen of the Universe, do not believe
Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not Die;
How should ye? by the Fruit? it gives you life
To knowledge: By the threatner? look on me,
Mee who have toucht and tasted, yet both live,
And life more perfect have attained than Fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my Lot.[53]

Ravan proceeds to Seeta as stealthily as Satan to Eve. The fear of self-discovery with perilous consequences thereof cautions the conduct of both Satan and Ravan. Ravan has changed himself into a sage but speaks vulgar words. His saintly disguise is deceptive and is used as a mask to cover his evil design. Satan deceives Eve and Ravan deceives Seeta, the former by fair words under heinous appearance the latter by vulgar words under saintly forms. Seeta also

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[52] P.L., IX, ll. 553-4.

[53] P.L., IX, ll. 685-691.

wonders and doubts. She can not believe a sage speaking foul words:

> Meanwhile Ravan found Seeta deserted
> And in the disguise of an ascetic near he went.
> -
> Alluring stories he described in various ways
> Diplomacy, fear and love he displayed.
> Seeta spoke: O revered ascetic! listen
> You speak words like a villain.[54]

Another thing which we find common to both of these characters is consciousness of their evil design which weakens the execution of it and exposes the ludicrosity of their conduct. In 'Ramcaritmanas' Tulasi Das writes sarcastically about his conduct when Ravan approaches Seeta:

> The gods and demons of him were afraid
> They could neither sleep at night nor eat at day.
> The same Ravan behaved like a dog
> Entering into Kitchen to steal the broth.[55]

This is a contemptuous remark which devalues all the victory, glory and glamour of Ravan. Immediately, Tulasi Das, however, becomes lenient and makes the pungeancy of his remark mild by saying that the greatness of Ravan is not imaginary,

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[54] Ramcaritmanas; Ar. K., ll. 27d, 7-25.

[55] Ibid., Ar. K., ll. 27d, 15-18.

it is a real greatness and his might and valour was unchallengeable. But as his conduct falls short of his glorious and world acknowledged supremacy, his greatness is turned into weakness. Tulasi Das says:

> O Garud! by adopting thus the evil path
> Wisdom, valour and talent are lost.

In Paradise Lost Satan is presented in a similar situation when he proceeds on his mischievous mission to dissuade Eve. The conduct of Satan causes regret in his mind at his fall. He is conscious of his evil and harmful design which leads him to degradation. But he seems to have no alternative. He has created the situation in which he is placed and he has accepted it as the price of self-seeking leader:

> Man he made, and for him built
> Magnificient this world, and Earth his seat,
> Him Lord pronounc't, and O indignitie!
> Subjected to his service Angel wings
> And flaming Ministers to watch and tend
> Their Earthie charge: Of these the vigilance
> I dread, and to elude, thus wrap't in mist
> Of midnight vapour glide obscure, and prie
> In every Bush and Brake, where hap may finde
> -

The serpent . . . .
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
O foul descent! that I who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a Beast.
But what not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? who aspires must down as low
As high he soared.[56]

Obviously three points are comparable in the character of Ravan and Satan. Satan is conscious of the magnitude of the object he wants to victimize. The creation of Man and his blessed fortune of dwelling in the Paradise is magnificient. This arouses both envy and wonder in Satan. Shocked back for a while at the majesty of human happiness Satan suffers a set-back. Ravan is also conscious of the excellent virtues, power and beauty of Seeta and dares not to touch her but by deception. Secondly, Satan is as much conscious of his evil intent as Ravan. Thirdly, both Ravan and Satan are reluctant in executing the self-imposed malicious task which demoralizes their enterprize at the very outset. Their attempt to cover up the reality with hypocrisy and weak assumptions fortells the defeat of their design. What makes them dissimilar is the instrument which they use in achieving their object. Ravan takes Mareech, a demon, with him

[56]P.L., IX, LL. 151-170.

as an aide. This demon is diffident of his own capacity and before consenting to the proposal of Ravan expresses his conviction in the supremacy of the enemy. It is under duress that he accompanies Ravan. He looks forward to his own death at the hand of Rama rather than to the success of Ravan. Tulasi Das says:

> In either ways he beheld his death
> Then for the refuge of Rama he prayed.[57]

Mareech therefore can be of no help to Ravan. He acknowledges his defeat. Ravan thus relies for his success on Mareech in vain. Mareech is interested in and seeks his own salvation. The instrument of Ravan is without strength. Satan also searches for an aide and gets it in a serpent. The serpent, however, is unaware of its being used by Satan. Satan enters into the serpent and activates it to work out his plan. The poor serpent, a beast by birth, is forced into action unknowingly. Serpent, therefore, adds no strength to Satan. It merely lends its body to Satan without being conscious of it. Hence there is no force in it. Serpent has virtually no entity in action and support of Satan.

There are many significant similarities which float

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[57] Ramcaritmanas: Ar. K., 11. 25d, 10-12.

on the surface when Rāvan and Satan are presented with their bands of followers in identical situations. There are debates and discussions in Paradise Lost and there is Pandemonium to provide a common platform for taking vital decisions. Arguments are offered both for and against the issue in question. There is an inclination in Satan to give freedom for expression of views with the hope that the views expressed must go in his favour. This is the very negation of the concept of freedom. An almost self-chosen leader, with feeble support of his followers, Satan makes up his mind to undertake the enterprize. The Pandemonium is sponsored to confirm his proposal for open rebellion irrespective of consequences. A non-conformist in himself he wants others to subscribe to his views. Hence the Pandemonium serves no purpose but for imposition of his views on others.

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters I have tried to bring the two poets of two countries together in order to evaluate them and stimulate new thinking on comparative study of the great works of these poets. The scholars in India have long been in contact with the English people and English language. Not only this, English has been treated always on the basis of top-most priority in India, particularly in the Universities and other institutions of learning. English literature has influenced Indian literatures in all the languages to a great extent. In spite of this there has been little work done on the comparative aspects of these two. I have in my own way attempted to present the comparisons between the works of John Milton and Tulasi Das who had written before the two countries and their languages came in contact. They wrote not under the influence of each other, on the contrary they were totally ignorant of each other. But their convictions in the ethical, philosophical, social and theological spheres were so identical that being put together the two poets would seem to belong to one country and one culture only. Milton appears more akin to Tulasi Das than

to many of the poets of England in the same way as Tulasi Das appears more akin to John Milton than to the poets of India. Both could be read together so identically in many ways that one could hardly believe that they had not been directly influenced by each other. In spite of this, not much has yet been done on this subject.

In my introduction I have glanced at the vastness of the subject and have already said that my choice and endeavour has been to study some of the points only. In chapter two I have outlined how the two poets judiciously delved deep into their respective traditions, grasped fully the theology and literature and reproduced the ideas derived from them into new frameworks. It was not a total borrowing or imitation. They attempted and succeeded to a very large extent in bringing about a synthesis between the past and the contemporary values. The holy sources, considered till their times as non-human, were transformed in their contemporary society into codes of religious, political and social ethics. The approaches of both the poets to the holy sources are similar. The unprecedented and perhaps the greatest contribution of these poets was that they inter-related the old concepts of holiness with the human values. They neither rejected nor totally accepted whether it was Bible or Vedas,

but brought them both in human contact and adding their own interpretations gave them a meaning and human relevance. The whole human civilisation seems to have been echoed in their songs with a prophetic forecast.

In Chapter three I have dealt with almost the same topic as in Chapter II dwelling upon the process of transformation of ancient literary wealth of aesthetic and historical character. The main purpose of John Milton was to write an epic of unsurpassable length and significance and for this he needed guidance both in style and in content. This was also the case with Tulasi Das. Both of them have described at length, wherever necessary, their indebtedness to poets and philosophers whose works have lent them both style and contents. To narrate a long story in verse with a high theme on a grand scale was not a new thing either in Europe or in India. Milton as well as Tulasi had a strong conviction that the God in Heaven liked songs. In the Ramcaritmanas Tulasi Das has written about the value of good poems and asserted that they are the most befitting and effective means for delighting and persuading God. I have therefore shown how the predecessors of John Milton and Tulasi Das could provide materials. Tulasi Das built the

theme of 'Ramcaritmanas' primarily on two great political works, 'Ramayana' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the former written by Valmiki and the latter by Vyasa. There is one story running in both of them but with a great difference of style and purpose. Tulasi Das creates a new epic out of these two works and names it as "Ramcaritmanas". The literal meaning of Ramcaritmanas as translated by W.D.P. Hill is 'The Holy Lake of Acts of Rama". The meaning of 'Ramayana' in English translation is the abode of Rama and of 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the transcendental abode of Rama. It is clear therefore, that Tulasi Das emphasizes on the acts of Rama which are performed in a world inhabited by human beings involving himself into the various roles of playing and performing social duties while retaining his divine entity intact. The Ramayana of Valmiki shows that everything happens in the life of Rama as a matter of course. A great prince and warrior he is, and his deeds are remarkable, but his birth does not seem to have been predetermined as is found in case of Rama of Tulasi Das. Adhyatma Ramayana is a philosophical work which elevates Rama to a transcendental stage. Tulasi Das had many other historical and poetical sources also and he made use of them to add aesthetic and moral texture to his work.

John Milton selected a theme for his Paradise Lost which was also of transcendental character, but he made it so complex that the Earth, the Heaven, the Hell and all those who inhabited there became the personages; and most of them to personify only the ideologies of the poet on various issues of life. The fall of Man, for that was his subject, is apparently not dealt with in isolation. It is an issue which all the forces of God and angels are seriously concerned with. John Milton had greater advantage than Tulasi Das. He benefited from the works of the poets both of his own country and of the continent. He knew and understood his own country and people well. Beowulf, Spenser, Chaucer and Shakespeare had passed on to him an enriched literary tradition, and to it Milton added his knowledge of a wide range of subjects which he had acquired from study and contacts both in England and outside. England which was getting too hot, at least politically, provoked Milton to formulate his views. His study of the work of Homer and Virgil gave him style, a technique to describe a long narrative story. The third chapter of my thesis discusses and examines how John Milton could transform his acquisitions in Paradise Lost.

In the fourth chapter I have deliberated a topic

which has been controversial for ages and is yet in the modern world unsolved topic. Women have played in literature roles, both mighty and meek. John Milton and Tulasi Das have their own views on women. I have examined how Tulasi Das makes the women play various roles according to their ranks on varying occasions. There are many female characters in 'Ramcaritmanas'. There are female characters not only in human society but in the assembly of gods also. The purpose is not to treat women in isolation or merely as objects of amorous play. They play significant role. Tulasi Das makes them behave as they are expected to behave in a natural position. I have tried to show that the poet is not biased towards female character as has been alleged by some scholars. What I have found is that the scholars themselves seem to have been biased, and with their suspicious reasoning have tried to malign the great poet by placing the female characters in notionally mistaken contexts. Milton's female characters are few in number and though they are the results of his own self-nurtured opinion and experiences he has dealt with them variously. His notion of women is certainly different from that of Tulasi Das, but the difference is conditioned by ethical circumspection of the contemporary society.

As regards the style and approach to characterisation I have touched upon the two main characters, Satan and Ravan. In stead of writing a separate chapter on the followers of these two eminent characters, which could have possibly been done, I have presented them in association with their leaders. Ravan and Satan have identical inclinations and their followers both agree and disagree with them. They are in categories and can not be grouped all in one class; they are good as well as bad. Some of them are wiser, if physically not mighter, then their leaders. This has been elaborately discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

It is hoped that my work will open new avenues for further research on comparative literature. I shall consider my effort amply awarded if it provokes scholars to take up such critical projects.

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